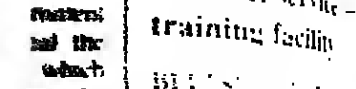




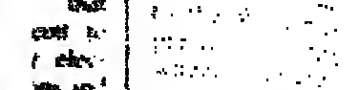
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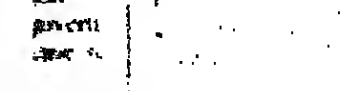
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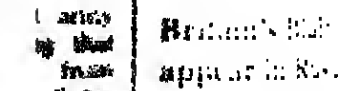
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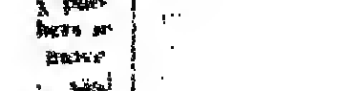
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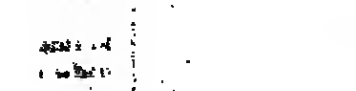
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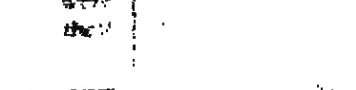
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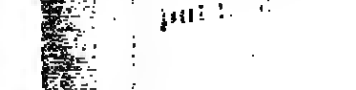
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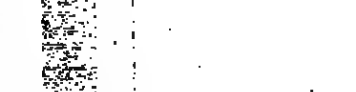
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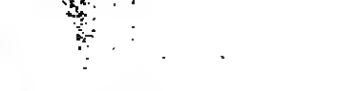
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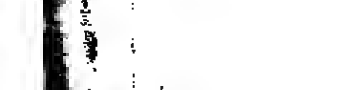
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Clinton takes a secret service training facility

Undercover Israeli troops kidnap youth — PNA

HEBRON (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on Monday accused undercover Israeli troops of kidnapping a teenager from a refugee camp near Hebron. Officials said the soldiers raided the Al Arub camp late Sunday and took away Khaled Hamas Awad Al Badawi, 16. The PNA planned to protest the abduction to Israel, they said. The reported kidnapping coincided with an ongoing crackdown by Israeli troops on suspected Islamist activists in the West Bank following a series of bombings in April since late July which killed 21 Israelis.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily
عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية

Volume 22 Number 6655

AMMAN TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1997, JUMADA II 5, 1418

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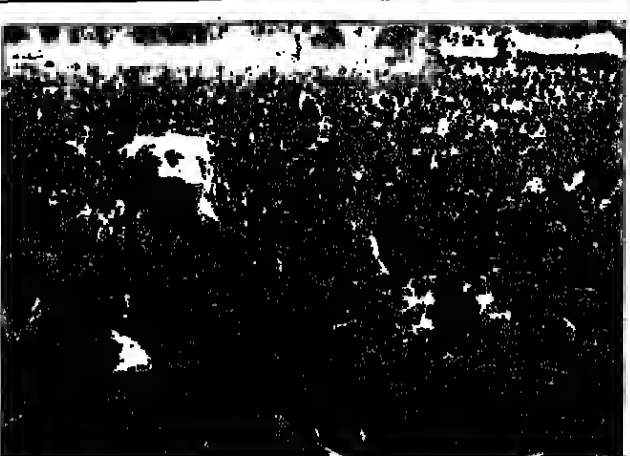
Sheikh Ahmad Yassin speaks to reporters Monday just before departing for Gaza, his home town. Surrounding the Sheikh are Gen. Adel Shraideh (left), Khaled Misha'al (2nd from right) and Gen. Youssef Ghosous (right). Sheikh Yassin thanked King Hussein for his efforts in releasing him (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)



The Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Yassin is placed on a Jordanian military helicopter that took him home, Monday. King Hussein ordered two Jordanian physiotherapists to accompany the ailing leader on the trip and stay in Gaza for his treatment for an unspecified period of time (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)



Sheikh Yassin arrives in the Gaza Strip late Monday to be greeted by Suha Arafat, wife of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat (2nd on the right), his wife Halima (right), Abdul Aziz Rantissi (2nd on the left), the Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, and Ismail Abu Shanab (left), his deputy during the 'Intifada' years (Reuters photo)



Tens of thousands of Palestinian supporters of Hamas cheer as the founder of the movement enters a stadium to greet his supporters, Monday. Sheikh Yassin was released from an Israeli prison in an apparent part of a deal between Jordan and Israel in which Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners were freed (Reuters photo)

Mossad fiasco ends with release of Jordanian prisoners, Israeli agents

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The fiasco created by Israel's attempt on the life of Hamas leader, Khaled Misha'al, on Sept. 24 ended Monday with Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin freed and back in the Gaza Strip, tens of Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli jails and the two Mossad agents back in Israel.

A Jordanian private military helicopter carried Sheikh Yassin from King Hussein Medical Centre (KHMC) to the Gaza Strip accompanied by two Jordanian physiotherapists.

Journalists covering the departure of Sheikh Yassin saw two Israeli helicopters taking off immediately from a place near the KHMC on Monday, apparently carrying the two Israeli agents back to Israel.

Admitting for the first time that Israeli secret service Mossad agents were responsible for the assassination attempt, Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid told the Jordan Times that the two agents were exchanged for 22 Jordanian detainees. Sheikh Yassin of Hamas and tens of

9 Jordanian prisoners released, 14 to follow

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nine Jordanian prisoners, who were set free Monday from Israeli jails, praised the propitious initiative of His Majesty King Hussein and the efforts he exerted to obtain their freedom, Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

A total of another 14 Jordanian prisoners are expected to arrive in the Kingdom at a later time, Petra said.

The group paid tribute to the King and valued his initiative which culminated in their release from Israeli prisons.

They said they hoped the King would continue his good efforts in order to ensure the release of the other prisoners still remaining in Israeli jails.

Abraham Mohammad Ghineim, a Jordanian prisoner who was serving a 15-year term in Israel, told Petra: "My joy is ineffable. This noble act is something that is not unusual for the King."

Among those that Petra interviewed were Mohammad Fuad Abu Afaneh, who was serving a 25-year term, and Mustafa Issa Othman, who was serving a 20-year term.

Jordan Television said in its main news bulletin last night that large numbers of Palestinian prisoners were also expected to be released on Monday and the coming days, including members of Hamas.

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Netanyahu unrepentant over attack on Misha'al, sets up commission to present him with recommendations Israeli prime minister says assault in Amman damaged relations with Jordan, however, 'this can be improved'

Combined agency
dispatches

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Monday the creation of a commission to investigate a botched attempt by his intelligence agency to assassinate a Hamas official in Jordan but defended the attempt as "our right to defend ourselves."

"We have decided to create a committee to investigate this matter and present recommendations," Mr. Netanyahu told a press conference in Israel.

The prime minister did not speak specifically of the attack on Hamas politburo chief Khaled Misha'al, which his officials have not publicly admitted was committed by Mossad. But he staunchly defended Israel's right to pursue "terrorists."

"We view it as our right to defend ourselves. We did the right thing for the right reasons. We are fighting the just battle against terrorist murderers and their dispatchers," he insisted.

"As prime minister I have the responsibility to do everything in my power to

U.S. walks thin line with Israel over Israel's flopped assassination attempt

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. sought Monday to spare Israel from harsh criticism over its botched assassination attempt in the Jordanian capital but President Bill Clinton noted that such conduct had been forsworn for decades.

The U.S. president declined to comment directly on the September 25 failed mission by two Israeli agents to kill Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al but he indicated disapproval by drawing a parallel with Washington's stance on such actions.

"The policy of the United States for our own conduct is, and has been, I believe for more than 20 years, under presidents of both parties, that we do not engage in assassinations," President Clinton said at a news conference.

The assassination attempt sparked a diplomatic crisis in which King Hussein reportedly threatened to break off relations with Israel unless it made amends for the incursion.

Desperate to avoid another blow to the faltering Middle East peace process, Washington

stepped in the fray and helped mediate a solution that reportedly involved Mr. Clinton himself making phone calls to Amman and Jerusalem.

"One of our major concerns has been to protect Jordanian-Israeli relations, which remain a cornerstone of the peace process," State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said.

"The Israelis have the obligation to defend their people from terrorist acts and we are not in the habit of second-guessing Israel when it comes to her security," Mr. Rubin said.

"That said, we believe that Israel must take into account the repercussions and consequences of any actions it takes in its fight against terror," he added.

The delicately-worded response from Washington suggested that the administration was trying to tone down criticism of Israel at a time when it is seeking to push Israel towards compromise to revive peace talks with the Palestinians.

fight the terrorist evil. This is a total war in which there is no compromise," he said.

Asked about the damage which the operation caused in relations with Jordan, Mr. Netanyahu insisted: "all countries that want and love peace have an obligation to fight terror."

"Relations with Jordan are important. These relations have been damaged but this can be improved. We will continue to develop these relations," he added.

He also launched into a scathing attack against his critics in the press, telling journalists to "examine your consciences after all the lies you have told."

Mr. Netanyahu spoke hours after Jordan returned

Yassin arrives in Gaza to a hero's welcome, says Hamas is pro-peace

'We love peace, and we call on them to live in peace with us'

By Tareq Ayyoub in
Amman and combined
agency dispatches

AMMAN — The Hamas spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Monday arrived in Gaza after receiving treatment in Jordan and telling a press conference that his group will support peace while it continues to resist occupation as long as it lasts.

"We tell the whole world, that we are peace seekers," Sheikh Yassin told reporters at a press conference in the King Hussein Medical Centre (KHMC) before his departure.

"We love peace, and we call on them (the Israelis) to live in peace with us (the Israelis). We call upon (the world) to help us in regaining our rights in a peaceful way. But if that was not possible, we shall not accept the (Israeli) occupation of our land," the 61-year-old Sheikh Yassin said.

Sheikh Yassin told the crowd of reporters at the KHMC that he was grateful to His Majesty King Hussein for his efforts to release him from Israeli jails and called upon the King to help in releasing more Palestinian detainees.

"I would like to thank His Majesty King Hussein for his noble initiative and his noble treatment he bestowed upon me," he said.

"I wish to extend my greetings to those who are still behind bars in Israel. We tell them that we are with you, and we call on His Majesty to take care of them and to seek their release," Sheikh Yassin said.

Speaking from his wheelchair, Sheikh Yassin, who was released last Wednesday, said that his group will not cease fire against Israel before the occupation is over.

"The halt of military attacks against Israel is linked with the departure of the occupation," the founder of Hamas said before he boarded a Jordanian military helicopter to Gaza.

The Hamas leader, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1989, said that Hamas will not allow any differences with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to turn into confrontation between the two.

"The PNA is part of the Palestinian people. We shall remain in one trench," he said.

The sheikh dismissed suggestions that his group will renounce armed struggle and seek a political solution and said that jihad — holy war — remains part and parcel of the ideology of Hamas.

Following is the text of the letter sent to His Majesty King Hussein by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin before his departure for Gaza, Monday

Your Majesty King Hussein,

AS I leave Amman, this steadfast city, to which I was attached spiritually as a sister city to Jerusalem and Gaza, I would like to express to Your Majesty my deep appreciation and gratitude for your great efforts to guarantee my release from Israeli jails. All my sons and brothers in the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, who have been offering sacrifices in defence of their land and their holy places and who have always been looking forward to supporting their brothers in the Arab and Islamic World share with me the feelings of gratitude.

The whole Palestinian people whose relations with Jordanians never weakened, share the same feelings with me about Jordan, the blessed land on which good people live and which is close to the Al Aqsa Holy Mosque. I leave this good country filled with the impression in my memory and my spirit of the good faces and generous people who offered me all that they have, especially at the King Hussein Medical Centre which was founded under your directions and care to serve as one of the most prominent medical centres of an international level. Through you, Your Majesty, the leader of this country, I hereby express my deep appreciation and thanks to this wonderful Jordanian family which will continue to serve as a sister to the Palestinian people providing relief to the Palestinians in adversity.

I implore God The Almighty to protect this good country and ensure its security and that of the Arab and Islamic World.

of Hamas.

He called upon Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to look for the

(Continued on page 7)

Israel, Palestinians resume peace talks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(AFP) — Palestinians and Israelis relaunched peace talks Monday after a seven-month standoff, but the U.S.-brokered initiative was overshadowed by the triumphant return of the Hamas founder to Gaza.

U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross met in a Jerusalem hotel with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian National Authority (PNA) negotiator Mahmoud Abbas to launch eight committees on implementing the 1995 interim self-rule accords.

Mr. Ross, who arrived in Israel Monday, earlier held separate rounds of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in Israel, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

The committees reactivated in Monday's talks aim to work out implementation of Israeli commitments left undone from the accords, particularly the opening of air and sea ports in Gaza, the opening of a safe passage route between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the free-

ing of Palestinian prisoners.

Peace talks between the two sides ground to a halt in March after Israel began construction of a 6,500-unit Jewish settlement on the hill-top of Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab east Jerusalem.

Monday's talks are to be followed by a meeting between officials from both sides with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on October 13 to address settlements and other issues blocking the full resumption of the peace process.

The Palestinians are seeking a halt to Jewish settlement construction, and senior Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath rejected Monday a reported proposal by Israel that it agree to a form of settlement freeze for up to nine months in return for a suspension of troops withdrawals from West Bank areas.

Under autonomy accords, Israel was to withdraw its troops from parts of the West Bank to hand them over to the PNA in three stages completed by mid 1998. The first two stages never took place.

EU seeks active role in Mideast peace process

LUXEMBOURG (R) — The

European Union (EU) signalled its determination on Monday to play a more active role in efforts to broker a lasting Middle East peace, proposing a "code of conduct" suggesting ways of how to relaunch negotiations.

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos, chairing a meeting of EU foreign ministers, said the document would be discussed with U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross and with Israeli and Palestinian officials.

In the code, both sides would be asked to safeguard what had already been achieved in the peace process, to introduce confidence measures in the fight against terrorism and to abstain from unilateral measures harming the peace process.

The EU also made proposals on economic policy in the region and suggested the setting up of an Israeli-Palestinian liaison committee to discuss "future ups and downs in the peace process," Mr. Poos said.

Foreign ministers from the 15-nation bloc welcomed the fact that the Israelis and Palestinians had agreed to

resume talks and so break the recent impasse in the peace process.

Palestinian-Israeli peace talks have been frozen since March over Jewish settlement building and Hamas bombings.

"This first stage should enable them next week in Washington to begin negotiations on the most fundamental aspects such as the redeployment of the Israeli army and cooperation on security matters," an EU statement said.

Ministers "expressed the hope that the parties would also agree to avoid any unilateral action which could make the progress of those negotiations more difficult or, indeed, cause them to fail."

Mr. Poos said the growing role of the EU's Middle East envoy Miguel-Angel Moratinos was increasing Europe's "visibility in the process together with American efforts."

Mr. Poos, welcoming U.S. efforts to relaunch the peace process, said there was a willingness on the American side to take into better account the European position.

Iraq to retaliate if attacked by Iran again

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi government newspaper warned Iran Monday that Baghdad would retaliate to any new attacks against Iranian opposition bases in Iraq.

"Aggression against a free and independent country will not be easy and we shall pay (Tehran) back two-fold," Al Jumhuriya daily said in a commentary.

Jumhuriya was reacting to remarks by Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi that Tehran had the right to attack Iranian "terrorist" opposition groups in Iraq.

"This is a right to self-defence," Mr. Kharrazi told the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat when asked whether Tehran planned to renew raids on Iraqi territory.

"As long as the terrorist groups are committing terrorist acts against our territory we have the right to defend ourselves," Mr. Kharrazi added in last week's interview conducted in New York.

"The remarks show exposed hypocrisy and playing with words for the service of dubious political ends," Jumhuriya said.

"We find in Kharrazi's statement a new challenge to international law...and it is the duty of the world body (U.N.) to denounce it."

Iran has protested to the United Nations over what it said were "terrorist" cross-border attacks from Iraq and said the incursions prompted its air raids on Iranian Mujahideen Khalq rebel bases inside Iraq last week.

Iran has said the raids were not intended against its 1980-88 Gulf war foe Iraq.

"We are exerting efforts to open new windows with Iraq. I have met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf...our talks were frank and we have decided to continue these talks," Mr. Kharrazi said of a meeting held on the outskirts of the U.N. General Assembly meeting last week.

Jumhuriya said Mr. Kharrazi's remarks ran contrary to those he made during his meeting with Mr. Sahaf in New York. "His statement contradicts what he personally told Mr. Sahaf that Iran is ready to open a new political dialogue with Iraq...based on respect and non-aggression."

Iran dismisses dispatch of U.S. carrier to Gulf as 'propaganda'

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran Sunday said the U.S. decision to speed an aircraft carrier to the Gulf following Tehran's incursions into Iraqi territory as a "propaganda" ploy.

Iran's navy chief Abbas Mohtaj said the move was aimed at overshadowing Washington's failure in preventing a \$2 billion gas deal between Iran and French firm Total, which falls foul of a U.S. law.

"This move has more of a propaganda feature. It comes because of the failure of the D'Amato Law and European companies' disregard of American threats," he said, referring to a controversial U.S. law named after its sponsor Senator Alfonse D'Amato seeking to punish foreign oil firms that trade with Iran and Libya.

"The Americans always replace one carrier which leaves the region with another," he said, quoted by Iran's official news agency IRNA.

The United States said Saturday that one of its aircraft carriers was steaming toward the Gulf following Iranian incursions into a "no-fly zone" in southern Iraq last week.

The accelerated deployment of the USS Nimitz and accompanying warships "is related to our ability to carry out responsibility given to us by the international community," the White House said.

But the Iranian admiral charged that the U.S. move was "in line with the illegitimate presence of foreign forces in the Arabian Gulf."

"Dozens of American warships in the region are a main cause of instability and insecurity," he said. "America's aim is to create a crisis and sell billions of dollars in weapons to the Arab countries of the Arabian Gulf."

According to a U.S. official, U.S.

forces in the region currently include five Tomahawk-capable destroyers, three frigates, and two minesweepers.

The latest carrier, initially scheduled to arrive here in mid-October, will take about five days to reach the Gulf, according to American officials. American forces have been deployed in the region to protect oil-rich Gulf Arab monarchies from perceived threats from Iran or Iraq. But Iran is staunchly opposed to their presence and calls for regional cooperation to ensure security.

IRNA, quoting navy officials, also charged that U.S. warships were "heavily polluting" Gulf waters and had caused "an environmental catastrophe."

"Because the American forces are banned from conducting manoeuvres in their own waters because of tough environmental laws, they come to regions where there are fewer sensitivities and they face less public protest," it said.

"The United States considers the Arabian Gulf region as a safe place for its military exercises, even for nuclear testing," IRNA added.

The United States dispatched the USS Nimitz after Iraq expressed outrage Monday at the Iranian raids against rebel bases there and called for an end to enforcement of the no-fly zone.

The zone, north of the 33rd Parallel, was set up in the wake of the 1991 Gulf war following a bloody offensive by Iraqi troops against Shiite opposition forces in the south of the country. Iran has described its air raids on Iraq as defensive operations aimed at "terrorist" bases, accusing Baghdad of helping Iranian rebels launch cross-border attacks.



CELEBRATING SHEIKH'S RETURN: A Palestinian woman dances in front of thousands of Palestinian supporters of the fundamentalist Hamas movement prior to the arrival of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of the Hamas movement, who was en route from Amman, Jordan, to Gaza City on Monday. Tens of thousands of supporters turned out for Sheikh Yassin's arrival in a stadium (see page 1 story) (Reuters photo)

Arafat torn between credibility and risking peace

By Wafa Amr
Reuters

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

— Palestinian President Yasser Arafat faces a problem: How can Israel expect him to crack down on Hamas after Israel freed one Hamas leader from a life sentence and saved the life of another?

"We are confused. It's a dilemma. We don't know," said a senior Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official.

"Israel releases Hamas officials and then asks us to arrest them. We would be seen by our people as the stick that Israel uses against them and we lose all credibility," said the PNA official, who declined to be identified.

"On the other hand, if we stop cracking down on Hamas, despite American and Israeli pressure to do so, we risk suspending the peace process since fighting terrorism has become a precondition for resuming talks," he added.

Israel's surprise release of jailed Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Hamas' founder, and his transfer to Jordan on Wednesday were widely seen as part of a swap for the future

release of two alleged Mossad agents suspected of trying to poison Hamas' politburo chief Khaled Misha'al in Amman.

Sheikh Yassin, released upon King Hussein's request, returned to Gaza on Monday. Foreign news reports said Israel had sent a doctor with an antidote to save the life of Mr. Misha'al.

Hamas, opposed to Israeli-PLO peace deals, has carried out a wave of bombings against Israel since the implementation of the accords in 1994. The two most recent attacks in Jerusalem killed 21 Israelis.

Under Israeli and American pressure to destroy Hamas' infrastructure, the PNA arrested Hamas activists and shut down some of their institutions in PNA ruled areas.

The PNA, kept in the dark over Sheikh Yassin's release, considered the move a slap in the face, especially after Israel ignored Mr. Arafat's repeated requests to free the ailing cleric from its jails.

"We hope this will be a lesson not to bow to American pressure because the interest of the Palestinian people is in their unity," said Abdul Aziz Rantissi, a Hamas leader in Gaza. "It is not in the interest

of the Palestinian [National] Authority to respond to American pressure."

Because King Hussein succeeded where Mr. Arafat failed, Palestinian officials feared a joint bid by Israel and Jordan to assert a Jordanian political role in Palestinian areas that might undermine the PNA.

"Is King Hussein going to negotiate further redeployments on our behalf in the future? Is he going to get Israel to give us the port, the airport and the safe passages as well?" said one PNA official.

"We are worried that these events would drag us into a conflict with both Hamas and Jordan," said another senior PNA official who insisted on not being identified.

"Our conflict with Jordan would be over who would deliver who would succeed in making Hamas stop attacks. Furthermore, we have been pushed to declare war against Hamas while [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu is making it a partner," the official said.

Political analyst Khalil Shikaki said that for the first time, all of Hamas' leaders were free and in Jordan. The

Misha'al affair, he said, had shown that the orders to carry out attacks came from Hamas' leadership abroad.

"I believe there are pressures from King Hussein on Hamas to freeze attacks, and they would take that path if the leaders in Amman resolved an internal power struggle," analyst Shikaki said.

He said that King Hussein had historically good relations with the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoot Hamas, therefore he was more likely to succeed in this also where Mr. Arafat failed.

Political analysts said Israel's bogged assassination attempt had gained popularity for Hamas and recognition as a major political player.

"Netanyahu has made Hamas one of his partners and the recent events have gained Hamas recognition whereby not only does it influence security matters, but the whole peace process as well," said political analyst Ghassan Khatib. "Netanyahu gives Hamas veto power on the peace process."

Saudi prince visits Iran in sign of improving relations

TEHRAN (AFP) — A Saudi prince and the kingdom's health minister were in Iran Monday to attend a health conference, in a sign of improving relations between the two countries, the official news agency IRNA said.

The prince, Ahmad Ben Abdul Aziz Al Saud, held talks Sunday with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Khatami stressed the "need for Tehran and Riyadh to expand ties."

"I hope for exemplary relations between the two countries as a basis for regional security and stability," he said.

The prince and Saudi Health Minister Usama Ben Abdul Majed Shabakshi arrived Saturday to attend an eastern Mediterranean health seminar. Iran has stepped up efforts in recent months to improve relations with Gulf Arab monarchies.

Qatar urges Gulf states to step up military cooperation

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar's armed forces chief urged Gulf Arab states here Monday to implement long-standing plans to step up military cooperation in the wake of the 1991 Gulf war.

"The Gulf region has over the last 10 years gone through the hardest tests of its existence," General Hamad Ben Ali Al Attiya told his counterparts at the

start of a two-day meeting in the Qatari capital.

"Our priority must be to develop our armed forces and boost cooperation and coordination," in the wake of the 1991 conflict which evicted Iraqi occupation forces from Kuwait, he said.

"A large number of decisions and recommendations have been taken in previous

meetings," but "today, we must examine the reasons for which their implementation has been held up," said the general.

The meeting is expected to focus on plans to increase the strength of a joint defence force, named Peninsula Shield, and to set up an aerial early-warning system, two projects which have been long stalled.

Turkey promises to fly back stranded tourists

ANKARA (AP) — The tourism minister Monday promised that thousands of stranded Scandinavian, German and British tourists would be flown back to their countries, after a Turkish tour operator went into a financial crisis.

"Nobody will be left suffering from this," Minister Ibrahim Gurdal told private news channel NTV.

An estimated 14,000 tourists are stranded in

resorts, mostly in Turkey's Mediterranean coast, a tourism official said.

Mr. Gurdal said he had enlisted the help of banks and travel companies to rescue tour operator tourism, which faces bankruptcy.

"The hotels have been very cooperative, allowing the tourists to stay beyond their time," said British embassy spokesman Owen Jenkins. Some 4,000 British are awaiting to be

flown back.

Hurriyet newspaper said creditors had seized eight planes of the Sunways Airlines Company, owned by tourism. The company had accrued debts amounting to \$57 million.

The company brings some 470,000 tourists, mostly from Scandinavia, to Turkey every year.

The government in a meeting last week, discussed ways in which to rescue tourism. "To save

Turkey's reputation," Hurriyet said.

Oger Tours, a Turkish company operating in Germany, has announced that it would fly all 6,000 German tourist customers back free of charge.

"We have so far flown close to 2,000 Germans back. No German tourist will be left in difficulty," Hurriyet quoted Huseyin Baraner, a director for Oger Tours, as saying.

Demirel visits Kuwait to boost ties

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel arrived in Kuwait Monday for a two-day visit aimed at boosting economic and other ties, officials said.

Mr. Demirel will hold talks with the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, on "bilateral issues and other regional subjects," an embassy official said.

The president will also seek "to promote Kuwaiti investment in Turkey" and

an agreement to avoid double taxation is expected to be signed during the visit, it said.

Ankara joined the U.S.-led coalition which expelled Iraq from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war and was rewarded with a \$1 billion contribution from the oil-rich emirate to help finance a project to assemble F-16 jets in Turkey.

Two-way trade stands at about \$200 million a year in favour of Turkey which

exports goods worth some \$130 million to Kuwait, the official news agency KUNA reported.

The emir visited Turkey in November 1991, meeting then President Turgut Ozal and inviting the Turkish head of state to visit Kuwait. Mr. Ozal died in 1993, and Mr. Demirel has accepted that invitation. Embassy officials said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandokan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
16:00 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Sarah
20:00 Coach
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Great Defender
23:15 I Remember Nelson
23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:12 Fajr
05:29 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:23 Dhuhr
14:44 Asr
17:18 Maghreb
18:35 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.
Amman International Church
Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

Qaqa, winds will be northerly
moderate to active and seas
calm.

Amman 15/26
Aqaba 21/34
Deserts 13/29
Jordan Valley 20/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 26, Aqaba 34. Humid-
ity readings: Amman 50 per
cent, Aqaba 23 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 759200
Dr. Khalid Abdo 657129
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 894788
Dr. Salman Daboubi 776751
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Sakam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Tammash 250080
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Dept. 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Res-
cue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency - 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111,
637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department
..... 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Com-
plaints 897467
Amman Municipality Com-
plaints 787111
Telephone Information (direc-
tory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs
661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority
..... 815615

Electric Power Company
636381
RJ Flight Information
0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-
53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre
813813/32
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Al-Jahid Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity
..... 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital
602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart
and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
..... (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital
..... (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
..... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital
..... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital
..... (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
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Royal Wings (RW) Flights
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Queen Noor guest of honour at annual women's lunch, delivers keynote address

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday was the guest of honour at the annual Women of the Year Lunch in London, whose theme was "making a difference," in recognition of her national and international work in the fields of children's welfare, women's and community development, environmental protection, culture and education, and public architecture and planning, according to a press release Monday.

In her keynote address, Queen Noor focused on women who have made a difference, particularly in Jordan and the Arab World, the statement continued.

She noted that "contrary to popular Western belief, there have always been influential and inspiring women throughout Arab history," citing the reign of Queen Arwa of Yemen in the 12th century, who was an ideal model of what "greater female influence in state affairs could accomplish. In spite of tribal rivalries and disputes endemic in her country, Queen Arwa managed to shift the emphasis of government from arms to agriculture and, an adept diplomat, regularly broke military deadlocks by negotiation, and she faithfully adhered to the terms of the treaties she concluded," according to the statement.

Queen Noor noted that "few Westerners realise that in the 7th century, Islam liberated attitudes towards women and granted them specific social, political, and economic rights long before Western societies did, such as the equal right to education, to conduct business, to own and inherit property, and not to be

coerced into a marriage. Islam also regulated polygamy, which had been unrestricted in the pre-Islamic era, and even ensured the most fundamental equal right, that of survival by banning the previously widespread practice of female infanticide," the statement read.

Speaking of more contemporary cases of women who have made a difference, especially in their own communities, Queen Noor cited the example of Umm Farid, a beneficiary of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) Women-in-Development Programme, which introduced modern business management concepts into women-centred training and income-generation projects, the press release continued.

She was trained by the Medicinal Herbs Scheme, which has enabled women to turn their home gardens and unexploited lands into farms for aromatic and medicinal herbs. Umm Farid now employs her own husband, among others, in a business producing and selling herb saplings in her district, and she and the other women in the project have in the first year produced an equivalent of nearly 10 per cent of Jordan's imports of thyme and sage, according to the statement.

Women, according to Queen Noor, have also played a vital role in protecting the environment while generating income. "Under a programme established by the NHF in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to promote environmentally and socially-sensitive development,

Samira Khleif and her family learned to weave baskets and upholster furniture using raw materials indigenous to the region, such as banana and palm leaves, rather than digging up native plants to sow foreign cash crops. Samira participated in the international environment day in Amman, where her family won the 'Model/Ideal Family Award' for their work. Her products are now sold in the village and throughout the country," the announcement continued.

The Queen underlined the importance of breaking down the barriers of ignorance and prejudice in achieving peace. She added that a number of her most important international commitments promote education as a tool of cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and peace, the statement read.

As president of the United World Colleges (UWC), a network of ten multi-cultural International Baccalaureate colleges around the world, Queen Noor has had "the privilege of supporting an extraordinary movement to inspire and encourage young people from around the world" to break down the barriers of ignorance and to live together in mutual respect. Nelson Mandela, the president of UWC's International Board, had described his daughters' experience at the UWC school in South Africa as "an island of non-racialism in the sea of apartheid," according to the press release.

The Queen, expressed her hope that the UWC will establish a college in the Middle East, as "the young people of our region could benefit greatly from such a

programme, and can, in turn, contribute a special perspective to its goals of tolerance, conflict resolution, and peace," the statement said.

A number of Jordanian educational initiatives, such as the Royal Endowment for Culture and Education (RECE) and the Jubilee School, already address these issues, said the Queen. RECE has provided scholarships to exceptional Jordanian students, with emphasis on women, to pursue postgraduate studies in areas vital to Jordan's national development. The Jubilee School, an independent secondary school for outstanding scholarship students from all over the country, seeks to foster a new generation of young leaders committed to peace, democracy, and social responsibility, the announcement continued.

The annual Women of the Year Lunch was founded in 1955 to highlight and salute women's work. A total of 500 leading women, who have distinguished themselves by outstanding achievements, gather together to represent a wide cross-section of working women, the statement continued.

The lunch also assists an important cause by raising funds and awareness for the Greater London Fund of the Blind, for which it has raised over 1 million pounds. The Blind Woman of the Year Award is given each year at the lunch to a visually-impaired woman achiever for "outstanding achievement in overcoming visual disability," the statement concluded.

Local supervisory committees for parliamentary elections sworn in

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid Monday said the government is determined to guarantee free and fair elections next month and will remain completely neutral and intent on providing the necessary facilities for voters.

At a swearing-in ceremony for the heads and members of central committees supervising the elections in 21 districts, Mr. Rashid said: "Today the work of the central committees began. This is one of the most important roles in the course of the election process, as the committees' work will be the focus of

public attention at the local, pan-Arab, and international levels."

The minister stated that the committees' role starts with the taking of the oath and ends up with the announcement of the election results, adding "you [committee members] are all administrative leaders in your districts and no doubt you have heard and read a lot about the accusations levelled against the government, even before we started preparing for the elections."

"[There are accusations] that the elections will be rigged and forged and no doubt you heard calls by some for boycotting the elections. But these accusa-

tions have no value on our part," he continued.

"We are confident that, with God's help, we will have free, transparent, and fair elections and we hope that with your efforts, the Jordanian people will elect the qualified Parliament that they deserve," the minister added.

He said His Majesty King Hussein has instructed the government to ensure free and fair elections for all, stressing that the government does not support a certain political party, as "all the candidates are our sons, including the opposition candidates. They are all part of the political set-up that is needed for Jordanian society."

The committees, which are chaired by local governors and include judges and government-appointed officials, will supervise the delivery of ballot boxes to local centres in each district on the eve of election day, the election process, and the counting of votes, and later will announce the final results.

The Ministry of Interior also announced that ballot boxes have been increased from 2,900 boxes in the 1993 elections to 3,695 boxes for next month's elections.

Nomination of candidates is due to begin Oct. 10 and will last three days.

Human rights society asks government for new low-cost housing for poor

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Society of Human Rights (JSHR) Monday issued a call for the government to construct low-cost housing estates for limited-income families and enable them to buy housing units by instalment.

A JSHR statement issued to mark World Habitat Day asked the government to undertake immediate measures to resolve chronic housing problems by introducing legislation to ensure low-cost housing, which it said can help the sector of society that has been suffering for at least ten years from issues connected to poverty and unemployment.

Solving such problems cannot be achieved through statements, conferences, or mere promises, as has been the response by successive governments in the past, but through a drastic and practical series of steps to guarantee the social, cultural, and economic needs

of the public, including their right to decent housing, the statement said.

Noting that Jordan has so far accomplished much in housing projects and through the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC), the statement said a great deal remains to be done to address the chronic problems.

The JSHR statement

drew attention to the points listed below.

Major parts of the residential areas in Amman and other governorates still suffer from poor services, including water, garbage disposal, street lighting, and environmental pollution. The statement named Ruseifa as an example.

Certain public sectors have been exposed to forcible eviction from their homes, e.g., the recent incident that occurred at Dirat town in the Jordan Valley and the Shamiyah district of Aqaba. The government was called on to avoid force in addressing problems relating to housing, especially if poor people are involved.

The high cost of living is forcing the income-earning members of families to place housing in second place after food in their budget, and therefore, low-cost housing schemes are desired to benefit the needy groups. The thousands of vacant housing units, mainly in western Amman, cannot benefit the poor since they cannot afford them.

The statement commended the government's ongoing efforts to implement the social safety package to improve the infrastructure and the environment of the Palestinian refugee camps and other underprivileged areas of Jordan.

Ousted civil servant wins case annulling 'demotion,' plans second lawsuit

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Parliament's bi-monthly magazine editor, Hassan Ayed, who was transferred from his job as editor to another in the House, won a case at the Higher Court of Justice annulling his transfer as being a demotion.

In the meantime, Mr. Ayed was transferred altogether from the House on Sept. 16, 1997, to the Ministry of Culture and Youth, a move he also intends to contest in court.

Mr. Ayed filed a lawsuit on Feb. 26, 1997, against Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses, Ahmad Lawzi and Sa'd Havel Srour, respectively, and the secretary generals of the Upper and Lower

Houses, Zeid Zreiqat and Mohammad Masalha, respectively, after they ordered his transfer from the post as an editor to an information and documentation coordinator.

"I was demoted from my position without apparent reason by the Parliament officials. This violates the Jordanian Civil Service Code, which prompted me to file the case," Mr. Hassan told the Jordan Times Monday.

In its Sept. 30 ruling, the court tribunal, headed by Judge Abdullah Haddadin and Judges Jamil Haddadin, Mishah Thiah, Hasham Ghareibeh, and Ismael Omary, decided to cancel the job transfer of Mr. Ayed. "Because the job he was transferred to does not exist in the State

positions,"

"I am happy that I won the case and I was sure that the judiciary was going to justify my case," he said.

Mr. Ayed added that he is planning to file a second lawsuit because he was again demoted when he was transferred from his Parliament position to the Ministry of Culture and Youth, two weeks before the case was settled in court, he claimed.

"I was informed of the move only five days ahead of time, and this violates my rights as a human and as a government employee," Mr. Ayed said.

Statistics department, U.N. group examine last census

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Statistics Monday organised a meeting, in conjunction with the U.N. Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) office in Amman, to examine the results of the 1994 national census, the most recent census held in the Kingdom.

The two-day meeting will focus attention on demographic, social, and health issues revealed by the census, which was conducted by the department with assistance from UNFPA, according to Abdul Hadi Alawin, the department director.

He told the opening session that the participants in the meeting, all specialists in population-related issues, will review 11 working papers, adding that population studies are the most important element in realising improved social and economic conditions.

Most developing nations suffer from problems that endanger their peoples' health and food security, Dr. Alawin said, warning that unless appropriate measures are taken to address these problems, serious consequences would follow.

He said the rising rates of population growth are outstripping the economic growth in most developing nations, and pointed out that demographic statistics and data are vital for decision-making and planning for socio-economic projects.

A UNFPA representative outlined the fund's assistance to developing countries to help them conduct general censuses, which he said can help decision-makers find solutions to economic and social problems.

Agreement signed rescheduling \$1 million of debt to Denmark

AMMAN (Petra) — An agreement was signed at the Ministry of Finance Monday on rescheduling nearly \$1.094 million of Jordan's debt to Denmark in implementation of a decision taken by the Paris Club in May of this year.

Dorte Chorsten, charge d'affaires at the Danish embassy in Damascus, signed the agreement with Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez, who said the agreement allows Jordan to pay this part of its debt in 20 instalments, the first to be paid on Oct. 31, 2008 and the last by April 30, 2018.

With this agreement, Denmark has rescheduled Jordanian debts totalling \$6 million, all interest free, according to the minister.

Foreign countries rescheduling Jordanian debts reflects the satisfaction displayed by creditors with the Kingdom's successful steps in implementing its economic restructuring programme, as per the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he added.



Dorte Chorsten, charge d'affaires at the Danish embassy in Damascus, and Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez Monday sign an agreement to reschedule \$1.094 million of Jordan's debt to Denmark (Petra photo)

The agreement with Denmark was one more chain in a series of agreements that Jordan has signed with the Paris Club on rescheduling \$400 million in debt, due between June of this year and Feb-

ruary of next year, according to the minister.

Mr. Hafez voiced Jordan's appreciation of the Danish government's assistance to the Kingdom, which he said is enabling it to carry out its

economic reform plans.

Mrs. Chorsten said she was pleased with the conclusion of the agreement, and said she hoped that the debt rescheduling will help Jordan effect its economic reforms.

Primary health care to be discussed at Fifth Jordanian-French Medical Congress

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Primary Health Care: Present and Future," is the theme of the Fifth Jordanian-French Medical Congress this year, Fathia Saudi, president of the Jordanian-French Medical Association (JFMA) said.

The subject originated from the importance of primary health care worldwide, the extended concepts on the prevention of common chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and osteoporosis, family planning, children's health, accidents, and child abuse, Dr. Saudi illustrated.

The conference will address several health-related issues, including education, environment, and population, she explained.

Several experts from France will be lecturing at this conference, as well as a consultant from the World Health Organisation, the president of the Doctors of the World, a French non-governmental organisation, the president of the Jordanian-French Friendship Society in the French parliament, and the president of the JFMA in France, she added.

His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid is the honorary president of the association, which will convene its congress in Amman in December.

The JFMA started its activities in 1991, on the initiative of local doctors that graduated from France.

It aims at developing communication and mutual support between doctors and health teams from both countries, Dr. Saudi said.

The JFMA is registered in France, where medical doctor Jacques Milliez is the president of the association.

The first Jordanian-French Medical Congress was held in 1991, where paediatric issues were discussed, followed in 1992 with a congress concerning economic and organisational aspects of health sys-

tems. In 1993, the third congress examined the continuity of medical education, while the last congress discussed genetics and genetic diseases.

The choices of the subjects, including the economic aspects of health care, insurance, and medical education, are of general interest to several specialties in the planning of health systems, Dr. Saudi stated.

The Ministry of Health and several universities' medical study departments are playing a major part in the preparations of the congress, she added.

WHAT'S GOING ON

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER '97 FESTIVAL

* Graphics by Rafa Nasiri of Iraq, Ziad Dalloul of Syria, and Najia Mehadiji at the South Hall.

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Qailoka at the Middle Hall.

* Sculpture, drawings, and paintings by Jordanian artist Rajwa Ali.

* Works by contemporary Arab artists at the Blue House.

* Paintings by children of Zarqa reflecting on the problem of pollution at the Byzantine church.

FILM

* "The Mask" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

PLAY

* Children's play "Shahrour and Traffic Rules" at the Royal Cultural

Centre at 10:00 a.m. (daily until Oct. 16).

EXHIBITIONS

* Japanese pottery exhibition by Soei Obiya at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 9.

* Exhibition of paintings and weaving entitled "Murmurs of Our Land" by Rihan Ghassib and Bani Hamida at Bani Hamida House (Tel. 658696/7), until Oct. 30.

* Exhibition of Catalan masters of the 20th century entitled "Aura Mediterrània" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 28 (except Tuesdays).

* Quilt exhibition "Piecing It Together" by Ms. Virginia Harris at the American Centre, Abdoun, until Oct. 20.

Blair signs anti-crime accord at Kremlin in first Russia visit

MOSCOW (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair met President Boris Yeltsin here Monday at the start of his first official visit to Russia, signing an anti-mafia accord and bringing a new warmth to the countries' relations.

The two men ignored heavy rain to shower each other in mutual admiration during talks at the Kremlin, where Mr. Blair signed an accord with counterpart Viktor Chernomyrdin on fighting international crime organisations.

The anti-crime accord sought to bring national security services into closer cooperation against the increasingly long reach of mafia groups, particularly Russian mafia organisations.

"This agreement between Britain and Russia is going to be a very, very important part of doing everything we can to combat organised crime," Mr. Blair said.

Mr. Yeltsin said crime syndicates and the drugs trade were major threats which demanded international cooperation, adding that Monday's agreement raised the level of cooperation between Russia and Britain to a new level.

A joint Russian-British operation this August result-

ed in seven arrests in Siberia and the seizure of 200 kilograms of cocaine, a record haul for Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin emerged from the talks clearly satisfied, saying: "It was interesting for me because the meeting lasted twice as long as planned. The talks were interesting for both of us," Interfax reported.

"Our relations are good, spotless," Mr. Yeltsin said, "but major dynamism is needed from both sides. Today we will agree on this."

The Russian leader heaped praise on his visitor, saying he was "very fond of young energetic people, and Tony Blair is the youngest British prime minister for many years."

"He is the most energetic, thrusting politician," said the 66-year-old Russian leader, who has himself been reinvigorated since undergoing a multiple heart bypass operation last Nov. 5.

Mr. Blair, at 44 the youngest British premier this century, said: "I would like to speak of my personal admiration for everything Boris Yeltsin has done for Russia and the world during these past few years."

"It has been an extraordi-

nary story of progress and reform that could not possibly have been carried out but for his personality, his character and drive."

Mr. Blair said he believed the strong personal relationship established between the two men "will build into even stronger relations between our two countries."

Mr. Blair was also handed copies of official documents and personal papers of Britons taken prisoner by the Germans in Europe and in North Africa during World War II, saying the move was "a very emotional moment for many of our servicemen."

The originals will remain in Russia until Mr. Yeltsin and the parliament resolve their dispute on whether war booty seized in Germany, ranging from documents to thousands of priceless art treasures, should be returned.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Yeltsin were also expected to discuss European security issues and relations between Russia and NATO, strained last week after NATO forces in Bosnia took over four transmitters from Serbian hardliners.

Mr. Yeltsin said Russia would take part in next May's summit of leading industrial nations in

Birmingham, England, as a fully-fledged member, and not as a special guest of the G-7 grouping.

"It will be clearly stated (in Birmingham): from now on, not even the slightest little thing will be discussed by just seven," he told Russia's RTR television station.

Mr. Blair was later to announce an increase of 500 million pounds (\$800 million) in British credit export guarantees, and a decision to increase training funds for Russian businessmen by five million pounds.

British exports to Russia are now running at a billion pounds (\$1.6 billion) a year, up 16 per cent from last year, but still far behind America and Germany.

Mr. Blair's brief visit was a chance for London and Moscow to improve ties cooled by a series of disputes during former prime minister John Major's time in office, including a serious spy scandal and Russia's internationally condemned war in Chechnya.

Mr. Blair was later to travel on the Moscow underground system, starting at the central Revolution Square and getting off two stops later at Smolenskaya.

Mr. Blair was to leave Moscow later Monday.



Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin (right) and his British counterpart Tony Blair shake hands while exchanging documents as Russian President Boris Yeltsin applauds during a meeting at the Kremlin. The two prime ministers signed an agreement on combating crime (Renter photo)

Conservative Party activists are truly blue ahead of conference

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Conservative Party, still reeling from its crushing defeat by Labour in the May general elections, holds its first annual conference in opposition for 18 years this week with morale at rock bottom.

Party members are quitting in droves, internal administration is creaking, and new leader William Hague, who succeeded John Major after the May debacle, is failing to convince.

"The party is in a pitiful state, the only encouraging aspect is that it can't get worse," said Malcolm Tindall, an official of the constituency party in Enfield South gate, north London, considered one of the more viable in the capital.

Blinded by nearly two decades of power, Tory activists are only now discovering that the party machinery is obsolete and the movement is slowly unravelling.

In the 1950s the Conservatives claimed 2.8 million members. Estimates today vary from 140,000 to 250,000, against more than 400,000 for Labour, but an accurate figure is impossible to obtain because there is no central registry.

Instead party management still lies largely with the various constituency associations, most of which are now left with no member of parliament to provide mutual support.

Each association is autonomous and is not obliged to account for itself to anyone, under a system set up by one of the founding fathers of the movement, Benjamin Disraeli, 170 years ago.

Many are now reduced to shadows of their former selves, without resources or workers.

"More than half are not really working constituencies," Mr. Tindall admitted. The decline in the number of loyal supporters is attributed to neglect of the grass roots by the leadership, which traditionally takes all the decisions with little or no consultation.

As a result, the average age of the membership is hovering perilously around 64.

David Benson, from west London, conceded: "We did not recruit as many young people as we would have expected." He would not admit how many members his own association now had.

"Our leadership has

become remote and arrogant," lamented Enfield South Gate treasurer Boh Goss. "Any criticism was considered as an attack."

As usual, the members of parliament — the relative few who survived the collapse in May — chose the new leader in June, coming up with the fresh-faced William Hague, portrayed as a reunifier who would heal the party's wounds.

He will bring to the party conference which opens in Blackpool, Northwest England today, a plan to reorganise the structure, supposedly giving more weight to the grass-roots.

But the party remains dissatisfied by Mr. Hague, who appears inexperienced, lacking a blueprint for the future and already guilty of mistakes.

"Nobody asked us when he was elected, nobody knows what he really thinks," said a young Tory local councillor, who preferred not to have her name published.

But she added: "We can't afford to topple our leader every six months. Now we have to unite and to rebuild the party, or we'll vanish from the political landscape."

Malaysian premier rules out resignation

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad said Monday he would not step down and accused Western media and financiers of trying to "get rid" of him.

"There is definitely attempts by certain parts of the Western media and fund managers to get rid of me. As far as I am concerned, it is a futile attempt," Mr. Mahathir told a news conference as he returned from a South American tour.

At the weekend, Mr. Mahathir staked his reputation on solving the country's financial crisis, hinting he may step down if he fails.

Mr. Mahathir voiced confidence that Malaysia can overcome its currency and stock market crisis "given time, discipline and patience" but admitted recovery was not going to be easy.

"We will do something about it. This (crisis) is not a major problem for us compared to some countries, who have gone through worse. We should not panic," he said.

"I am sure we can overcome this on our own since our fundamentals are still very strong but recovery is not going to be easy," he added. Mr. Mahathir reminded Malaysians "never to forget that this is a blip on the computer screen" where countless people have lost money and become bankrupt, adding that "this is serious."

The government has come under pressure to put its economy in order after the ringgit lost more than 30 per cent against the dollar. The stock market has lost more than one-third of its capitalisation since a regional turmoil set off by the Thai baht's devaluation on July 2.

Foreign investors have largely deserted the Malaysian bourse and an economic slowdown is projected after growth of above eight per cent a year since 1987.

Mr. Mahathir again took another swipe at foreign investors, whom he blames for manipulating the ringgit and share prices. He said Malaysia would not bow down to foreign pressure.

"We are independent, we want to remain independent. We want to have the freedom to criticise anybody we like," he said.

"We can recover but we cannot forgive them (foreigners) for what they have done to us. We work 40 years to develop Malaysia and the moment you are rich enough to be robbed, they rob you," he added.

H. Kong on contaminated food from U.S. alert

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong was on alert Monday over American beef feared contaminated with a potentially deadly bacteria, just days after another health scare over U.S.-made ice cream.

Health officials were bunting for around one tonne of U.S. beef feared infected with the E-coli 0157:H7 bacteria, a Health Department spokesman said.

"We have taken samples from the markets. So far, we have not found any presence" of the bacteria, she said.

Officials urged the public to ensure beef is thoroughly cooked to "minimise health risks."

South Korea banned the sale of Iowa Beef Packers meat when traces of the bacteria were found last Thursday. Three Hong Kong traders reportedly imported beef from the same supplier.

The spokesman said beef samples were being tested for the bacteria as supplies were located but that results would not be available for several days.

"We have contacted the U.S. consulate for more details," she said.

Health Director Margaret Chan said last Sunday that it was not clear how much of the shipment was on sale or whether it was contaminated.

"At this stage we can only call on meat shops to withdraw products on a voluntary basis," she said.

There have been at least three cases of beef contaminated with the bacteria here this year.

In March, minced beef was found containing the strain, which has been linked to 11 deaths in Japan and 20 in Scotland in recent months.

Hong Kong is also on constant alert against Chinese vegetables contaminated with banned chemical fertilisers, and smuggled ship-

ments of pigs which have not undergone health checks.

The beef alert came three days after health officials ordered the withdrawal from sale of some 8,000 ice cream bars believed to have been contaminated with listeria. About 1,000 bars were thought to have already been sold.

Officials met two U.S. experts sent by American ice cream manufacturer Dreyer's after a batch of its cookies "N Cream bars" were found to contain a strain of listeria, thought to have been caused by tainted milk.

The Health Department spokesman said talks centred on how the ice cream was made and the possible source of contamination.

Jan Doherty, a vice president of Dreyer's local distributor Mountain Cream, told reporters "the production line has been halted to find the possible sort of contamination," adding it was "an isolated case."

Listeria monocytogenes can cause fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, meningitis and miscarriages, officials said.

The young, the elderly and pregnant women were most at risk. However, most people could consume products contaminated with the virus without adverse effects, the health department spokesman said.

Dreyer's exports more than four million litres of ice cream to Hong Kong annually.

Food poisoning in Hong Kong increased dramatically last year. In 1996, 4,98 cases for every 100,000 people were reported compared with 3.25 the previous years.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection team was to arrive in South Korea late Monday to inspect tonnes of beef found to be contaminated with the E-coli bacteria.

S. Korean groups threaten boycott of U.S. goods

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean civic groups threatened Monday to boycott U.S. goods unless Washington stopped putting pressure on Seoul to further open up its auto market, as a U.S. team arrived to inspect allegedly-contaminated American beef.

"If the U.S. does not stop, we will use all means, and not just boycotting U.S. products, to fight this," said Yoo Ki-Hong, head of one of the civic groups demonstrating near the U.S. embassy in central Seoul.

The anti-U.S. protests came as a four-member U.S. team from the Department of Agriculture, led by Kay Wachsmuth, arrived in Seoul to check on South Korea's findings of E. coli bacteria in Nebraska beef, supplied by Iowa Beef Packers.

On arrival Ms. Wachsmuth expressed strong suspicions of the South Korean contamination findings and called for an early settlement of the issue, Yonhap News Agency said.

An official at the Ministry of Health and Welfare said they would explain the findings to the U.S. team, but would refuse a joint inspection suggested by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman.

"We will explain to them our inspection procedures, and anything else they want to know. But we do not plan to hold joint inspections," he told AFP.

Hong Kong too was on alert Monday over U.S. beef after three of its traders reported they had imported beef from the same supplier.

At the protest near the U.S. embassy in Seoul, the civic group "People's Victory 21" handed over a letter addressed to U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"The reason why U.S. cars are not selling well in Korea is not because of the trade

barriers, but because of their competitiveness," the letter said.

"We warn that such pressure will only hurt your country," it said.

"Your country is also infuriating South Koreans because it seems as if you can't trust our inspection of the 0-157 (E. coli). You must realise that things like this only worsen relations between both countries."

In another demonstration, about 40 South Koreans rallied at Seoul's Pagoda Park, urging citizens to sign petitions against U.S. goods.

"We did a survey and found that more people were simply buying less U.S. goods such as cigarettes," said a spokeswoman for the Citizens Movement against Over-Consumption.

She said the protesters made an "Uncle Sam" effigy, wearing blue jeans and a T-shirt, to demonstrate the anti-U.S. nature of the protest.

"We will continue to collect signatures and step up our protests unless the U.S. stops pressure on us to open up our car market further," she said.

A trade dispute flared between the two nations after the United States decided to probe South Korea's barriers to car imports, and Seoul retaliated by saying it was ready to take the dispute to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The U.S. trade representative said South Korea would be the target of a Super 301 investigation, which allows the U.S. government to act against countries deemed to have engaged in "unreasonable, unjustifiable, or discriminatory" practices that restrict U.S. commerce.

Meanwhile, South Korea began inspecting U.S.-made ice creams after finding some brands contained a strain of the bacteria listeria.

More than 200 killed in Sri Lanka northern battles

COLOMBO (AFP) — Intense fighting between Sri Lankan security forces and Tamil Tiger guerrillas left at least 207 people dead on both sides, defence officials said Monday.

Fiercest fighting was in the north where troops hacked by tanks and helicopter gun ships moved into territory held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) Sunday, a Defence Ministry statement said.

There was heavy fighting in the north near the

Mankulam-Mullaitivu road and the statement said 150 guerrillas and 34 government soldiers were killed.

Other defence sources said 38 soldiers were killed and more than 100 wounded. "Terrorists continued to engage troops with mortars," the statement said. "Troops were supported by artillery and air force. A Mi-24 helicopter (gun ship) was slightly damaged due to terrorist fire."

The ministry said the guerrillas mounted a pre-dawn counter offensive on

troops manning defences further south, near the newly-captured position of Kanakarayankulam, Sunday night.

"This counterattack was very effectively repulsed by the troops causing heavy casualties among them," the ministry said. There were no reports of exact casualties from either side in the pre-dawn confrontation.

Within hours of the attack, the Tiger guerrillas struck in the eastern district of Ampara, overrunning a

police station and killing eight constables, officials said.

Local officials said at least 10 Tiger guerrillas died in the battle. "The Tigers have escaped after torching one building and removing weapons from their victims," a local official said.

The government deployed air force jets to try and counter the attack by the rebels, some of whom escaped in tractor trailers. Fifteen constables were also injured, officials said.

The Defence Ministry did not say how many rebels were killed in the police station battle but said there were "heavy casualties" among the Tigers.

There was no immediate word from the LTTE about the latest fighting in the north and the east of the country. The fighting in the north is aimed at government troops, attempts to open a key land route to the northern peninsula of Jaffna which security forces captured from Tiger guerrillas in December 1995.

Official figures show more than 1,800 people from both sides have been killed since government security forces launched the current ground offensive on May 13.

Troops are battling to open the 75-kilometre stretch of road to Jaffna from the northern frontier region of Vavuniya, 254 kilometres north of the capital Colombo.

The military has taken just over 17 kilometres of the main road to Jaffna and have begun pushing for-

ward through jungle terrain to avoid stiff rebel resistance along the highway, military sources said.

The military has admitted losing about 730 soldiers since the campaign began.

The LTTE is leading a drawn out campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions which it claims are their traditional homeland. More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting in the past 25 years.

Court rejects Basque leaders' defence motion

MADRID (AFP) — The historic trial of 23 Basque separatist politicians was delayed Monday following a failed attempt by the defence to seek the removal of the presiding Supreme Court judge.

In a last-minute appeal just as the historic trial was to get under way, attorneys for the Herri Batasuna Party argued that their clients would not receive a fair trial because Chief Justice Jose Augusto de Vega has a daughter who works for the Interior Ministry where the judge made frequent visits in recent months.

But the eight Supreme Court judges who considered the motion ruled it was "unfounded" following an emergency session that lasted several hours.

It was unclear when the trial would start. A judicial source said that the tribunal would issue within the next 24 hours a new order for the defendants to appear in court and the trial could open next Monday.

Herri Batasuna is the political wing of the armed separatist group ETA, which has been waging a campaign to create an independent state in the Basque country and has grown increasingly unpopular especially following the July killing of a municipal councillor.

The party's leadership faces charges of collaborating with an armed group. This stems from party election rallies in 1996 at which videotapes showing hooded ETA paramilitaries and defending ETA were broadcast.

The party, which has 12 per cent of the Basque vote, is also accused of defending two murders, carried out by ETA, in Herri Batasuna press statements.

The prosecution is seeking an eight-year jail term for each of the 23 defendants while civil parties, represented by various organisations including the Association for Victims of Terrorism, are expected to seek 22 years in prison against the accused.

The case marks the first time in Spanish history that the entire leadership of the Herri Batasuna Party has been put on trial. The defendants in the case have already served an average of two months in jail this year before agreeing to pay a high sum to be freed on bail.

Following their arrest, they had to be forcibly brought to court for their arraignment after claiming that they did not recognize the Spanish justice system.

The trial is backed by the majority of the Spanish political class which believes it is high time to put an end to Herri Batasuna's "complicity" with the ETA.

Defence Attorney Inigo Iruin argued Monday that the motion to remove the presiding judge from the case was based on frequent visits he made in recent months to the Interior Ministry where his daughter was recently appointed to a high position.

He said although the visits were probably of a personal nature, they led to a "close relationship" developing between the judge and ministry officials.

Mr. Iruin added that the motion was also based on "pressure" exerted by the government on the court so that the defendants are found guilty.

The Herri Batasuna leadership had threatened further attacks ahead of the trial, which it argues is politically motivated.

ETA has been fighting since the late 1960s to carve out an independent homeland in the Basque country of northern Spain. Its bombings and other attacks have left hundreds of people dead.

The July 12 killing of Emma González, Miguel Ángel Blanco Garrido after a 48-hour ultimatum, sparked national outrage, causing six million people to take to the streets to denounce terrorism.

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Court rejects Basque leaders' defence motion

MADRID (AFP) — A court in Madrid has rejected a defence motion filed by the Basque nationalist group ETA, claiming that its members were acting in self-defence against the Spanish state. The court, presided over by Judge Baltasar Garçon, found the motion inadmissible, stating that the defence had not provided sufficient evidence to support its claims. The case involves several ETA members who are facing charges of terrorism and armed rebellion. The court's decision is a significant setback for the group's legal strategy.

American Stanley B. Prusiner awarded 1997 Nobel medicine prize

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — American researcher Stanley B. Prusiner won the Nobel prize for medicine Monday for his discovery of prions, agents thought to cause Alzheimer's as well as the human and animal forms of mad-cow disease. Dr. Prusiner, now a 55-year-old professor at the University of California at San Francisco, began his ground-breaking research 25 years ago after one of his patients died of dementia resulting from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD).



File photo of American biochemist Stanley Prusiner whose discovery provided key insights into dementia-related diseases (Reuter photo)

Prusiner's discovery of prions, which are misfolded proteins that can induce other proteins to misfold, has revolutionized the understanding of several neurodegenerative diseases. His work shows that prions can be transmitted between individuals, much like infectious agents. This discovery has implications for the treatment and prevention of diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and the variant form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Prusiner's research also opens up new avenues for understanding the pathogenesis of these diseases and for developing targeted therapies.

Nobel medicine prize winners over last 10 years

- 1997: Stanley B. Prusiner (U.S.)
- 1996: Peter C. Doherty (Australia), Rolf Zinkernagel (Switzerland)
- 1995: Edward B. Lewis (U.S.), Christiane Nusslein-Volhard and Eric F. Wieschaus (US)
- 1994: Alfred G. Gilman (U.S.), Martin Rodbell (U.S.)
- 1993: Richard J. Roberts (U.S.), Phillip A. Sharp (U.S.)
- 1992: Edmond H. Fischer (U.S.), Edwin G. Krebs (U.S.)
- 1991: Erwin Neher (Germany), Bert Sakmann (Germany)
- 1990: Joseph E. Murray (U.S.), E. Donnall Thomas (U.S.)
- 1989: Michael Bishop (U.S.), Harold E. Varmus (U.S.)
- 1988: Gertrude B. Elion (U.S.), George H. Hitchings (U.S.), Sir James W. Black (Britain)

Australian PM under fire for demoting female ministers

SYDNEY (AFP) — Prime Minister John Howard came under fire Monday, this time for demoting two of his four female ministers in Sunday's ministerial reshuffle. The Daily Telegraph's front page headline screamed "Men's Work" while prominent feminists said the women and women's issues had been downgraded. The Australian said the reshuffle was "neat but negative, clever but unimaginative" while The Sydney Morning Herald said the limited changes "serve only to expose the lack of depth in his team."

Howard stripped Amanda Vanstone of the employment, education and training portfolio Sunday and demoted her to the lesser portfolio of justice while women's affairs was removed altogether from cabinet. That job was given to Judy Moylan but she was relieved of her family services portfolio. Mr. Howard Monday dismissed suggestions that the reshuffle downgraded the interests of women. "Anybody who sees the situation where you've got a woman full-time on the job looking

after the status of women as part of my ministry is in some way downgrading women's affairs, well that is just ridiculous," he told reporters. "The net outcome of that will be an enhanced focus on women's issues." But Eva Cox of the Women's Electoral Lobby said: "I think it is interesting that two women who are prepared to, in a sense, commit themselves as being supporters of a lot of women's issues have both been demoted." "There is quite a problem about being able to speak out, not on specific women's issues, but on the general issues and how they affect women." Her views were endorsed by Susan Ryan, a former

cabinet minister in Bob Hawke's Labour government. "It will mean that information about women's work needs, health needs and so on will be even further removed from the day-to-day business of the cabinet." Women's advisor to former Labour Prime Minister Paul Keating, Anne Summers, said: "There's no doubt women have been the losers in this reshuffle." Labour finance spokesman Nick Sherry, who slashed his wrists after being accused by the conservative coalition government of claiming \$43,000 in travel allowances while staying with his mother, remained in satisfactory condition in hospital.

Indonesia says smog will lift in October

JAKARTA (R) — Choking smog hanging over Southeast Asia is expected to lift this month with the beginning of the monsoon season, Indonesian government officials said Monday. And Environment Minister Sarwono Kusumaatmadja said Indonesia would ensure that the smog, caused by hundreds of out-of-control forest and bush fires, did not recur in later years. "Otherwise we are all out of business," he told a news conference. President Suharto Sunday repeated an apology for the smog drifting across Southeast Asia from fires he described as an unprecedented natural disaster. The smog has angered people in neighbouring nations, and Indonesia has been criticised both at home and abroad for what is seen as its slow response to the crisis. Sri Diharjo, the head of

Jakarta's Meteorology Department, said the smog would start to lift in the middle of October with the onset of the monsoon, ending a protracted drought. He told the news conference that rains would be widespread in the Sumatra and Kalimantan regions, the site of the highest bush fires. Fires across an estimated 750,000 hectares on Sumatra and in Kalimantan, on the Indonesian side of Borneo Island, triggered the smog which has hit Singapore and Malaysia and drifted as far as Thailand and the Philippines. The fires have destroyed plantations and timber forests, causing losses of about 45.7 billion rupiah (\$12 million), and led to the cancellation of about 3,372 flights because of low visibility, other officials said. Mr. Diharjo said efforts to put out the blazes by Indonesian and Malaysian firefighters

had started to bear fruit. "The number of hot spots in Sumatra and Kalimantan is declining in line with the rains and the efforts to put out the fires," Mr. Diharjo said. He said some rain had already fallen in parts of Sumatra, Kalimantan and Java, adding that more widespread rains were expected to fall throughout the archipelago in November. Mr. Kusumaatmadja said most of the fires had been started by plantation companies clearing land to plant new trees. "The contribution of small-scale burning (by traditional slash-and-burn cultivators) is very small," he said. Asked if political connections of some of the big plantation owners would hinder any action the government might wish to take, he said: "For the time being, all connections are off. And I hope forever. I have been given a

free hand. "Action against these companies is proceeding at a very un-Indonesian pace," Mr. Kusumaatmadja added. Agriculture Minister Syarifuddin Bahasyah said the fires had hit 242 plantations, mostly rubber and palm oil, on Kalimantan and Sumatra, covering a total 121,630 hectares. "The reports we have received say that most of the fires have been put out, except those at 10 plantations, which are still burning in areas affected by land-clearing activities," said Mr. Bahasyah, adding his ministry had summoned 29 companies believed to have burned land to open plantations. Forestry Minister Djamiludin Soeryohadikusumo said 96,700 hectares of natural and timber forests had been burnt, adding that forestry companies had suffered at least 45.7 billion rupiah in losses.

10 Bosnian Croat war crimes suspects surrender to U.N.

SPLIT, Croatia (AFP) — Ten Bosnian Croats, including one of Bosnia's most wanted war crimes suspects, Dario Kordic, flew voluntarily out of here Monday to answer war crimes charges before the U.N. tribunal in the Hague. They will appear before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia charged with crimes against Muslims in central Bosnia in 1992 and 1993. The 10 men left aboard a Dutch Hercules C130 plane which set off from the airport in the southern Croatian port of Split at 10:30 (0830 GMT).



Bosnian Croat Dario Kordic speaks at Split airport before leaving Croatia to surrender to the U.N. war crimes tribunal in the Hague (Reuter photo)

Speaking on behalf of the suspects, Mr. Kordic, 36, a wartime Bosnian Croat commander in central Bosnia who is accused of crimes against humanity, said they would return with their heads held high. "We have come to the Republic of Croatia and voluntarily turned ourselves over to the Croatian authorities, trusting that President (Franjo) Tudjman and the Croatian government will be a guarantee of a fair and speedy trial before the international tribunal," he said. "We shall endure all this as we have endured everything so far, and will return to where we are with our heads held high," he said, looking tense.

Going with Mr. Kordic to the Hague were the former Bosnian Croat commander in the central town of Vitez, Mario Cerkez, former Vitez Mayor Ivan Santic and former Vitez police chief Pero Skopljak. There were also six former Bosnian Croat militia members from the group known as "Kupresko and others" — Zoran Kupreskic, Mirjan Kupreskic, Vladimir Santic, Drago Josipovic, Marinko Katava and Dragan Papic. The ten men, of whom the

only one in custody was Skopljak — he had been in jail in Croatia — were accompanied to the plane by international and Croatian officials. Their departure followed intense international pressure on Zagreb which had backed its Bosnian Croat kin in the war, notably from Washington which blocked a \$30 million World Bank loan. The 10 agreed to hand themselves in after Zagreb won guarantees from the United States that the trials would take place within three to five months. U.S. envoy Robert Gelbard, welcoming Monday's events as a "step forward," warned that Bosnian Serb war crime suspects should pay heed and follow suit. "Those who surrender today will be assured of a fair trial and due process. Their willingness to appear voluntarily at the Hague to face the charges brought against them is an example that other indictees would be well advised to follow," he told a press conference here. He warned that Washington would keep open all options to bring to justice top war crimes suspects such as former Bosnian Serb Leader Radovan Karadzic, former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic and former Croatian Serb leader Milan Martić. "Those indictees still at large who choose not to surrender must know that the United States remains committed to keeping open all possible options for making them available to the tribunal for prosecution," he said. Speaking on behalf of the Croatian authorities, presidential advisor Ivo Pasalic said Zagreb had demonstrated its commitment to the 1995 Dayton Peace accords and the 1994 Washington agreement which set up Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation. "The role and the assistance of the Croatian authorities has been motivated by the wish to safeguard the personal dignity of the indictees and to protect general Croat interests in the Republic of Croatia and the (Muslim-Croat) Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said.

Inconclusive polls herald Yugoslav uncertainty

BELGRADE (AFP) — Inconclusive presidential elections in both parts of federal Yugoslavia were a setback for Balkan strongman Slobodan Milosevic and a prelude to months of political uncertainty, preliminary results showed Monday. The vote in Serbia's presidential run-off was likely to be invalidated because of a turnout below the required 50 per cent, while Montenegro's election headed for a second round as neither of the two main candidates won a majority in the first. In Belgrade, the parties of both Vojislav Seselj and Zoran Lilic claimed to be ahead in the contest to succeed Mr. Milosevic as Serbian leader, a position he vacated when elected Yugoslav president in July. Montenegrins will hold their runoff election on Oct. 19, between the incumbent and an outspoken critic of Mr. Milosevic, the electoral commission said. Neither President Momir Bulatovic nor his main challenger, Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic, won an outright majority in the first round, with preliminary results released Monday showing Mr. Bulatovic with over 47 per cent, to Mr. Djukanovic's 46 per cent.

Mr. Bulatovic is a close ally of Mr. Milosevic, while Mr. Djukanovic has criticised him strongly for failing to introduce democratic reforms and boost the economy. Belgrade and Mr. Bulatovic accuse Mr. Djukanovic of wanting to take the republic out of the federation. The other six candidates were well adrift. Turnout was over 67 per cent. Observers in Podgorica say that Mr. Bulatovic, Montenegro's leader since 1992, has a stable voting base, while the more dynamic premier would probably not get the same amount of support as in the first round. "Whatever the outcome in the two republics will be, it will bring a weak Yugoslav federation to the edge of political crisis," a Western diplomat here said. In Serbia, Mr. Seselj's extreme right nationalist Radical Party claimed outright victory over Mr. Milosevic's handpicked successor Zoran Lilic, of the strongman's Socialist Party (SPS). But the Serbian electoral

commission had yet to announce preliminary results by midday Monday and Belgrade's state-controlled media reported the turnout was below the required 50 per cent. The radicals claimed their man had won outright with 51 per cent of the votes, ahead of Mr. Lilic's 48 per cent, with 95 per cent of the votes counted. They also claimed turnout was over 50 per cent. SPS spokesman Ivica Dacic said Mr. Lilic was ahead but added: "The turnout probably will not reach 50 per cent." If the low turnout is confirmed, Serbia will face several months without a president, as fresh polls have to be called by the newly-appointed parliament speaker. And the assembly has not met yet following the legislative elections held on Sept. 21, held simultaneously with the first round of the presidential polls. Observers in Belgrade say it could be the end of the year before a new run-off is staged. And Serbia will also face problems in forming the government since it falls to the president to propose a prime minister. The SPS failed to win a majority in the Serbian assembly, getting just 110 seats in the 250-strong parliament, 16 short of an absolute majority. Mr. Seselj's party won 82 seats and Vuk Draskovic's Serbian Renewal Movement

(SPO) came third with 45 seats, with the rest going to minor parties representing ethnic Hungarians, Muslims and Albanians. "The uncertainty of Serbia's electorate is a more serious problem for Milosevic than the failure to elect new president," a Western diplomat here said. Sunday's voting took place amid widespread disillusionment among Serbia's 10 million population and a boycott call by 12 main opposition parties that seemed to have been heeded. Some 1.8 million ethnic Albanians in Kosovo also refused to vote, as they have done since Mr. Milosevic's regime stripped their southern Serbian province of its autonomy in 1989.

Haret Jdoudna

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Netanyahu fails promise

Israelis risk losing security and peace

LESS THAN two years after he was voted into office, primarily on the promise of providing the Israeli people with peace and security, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has put his people at the risk of losing both.

His reckless short-sighted policies are threatening the collapse of the very delicate peace-making process that was carefully nurtured over the last five years.

Netanyahu is, obviously, a leader with no vision other than that of realising short-term gains which begin and end with television in sound bites and newspaper headlines. What he has miserably failed to understand is that peace is the only option for everybody in this region, that bringing about such a peace needs clear strategies not theatrical performances.

The botched assassination attempt in Amman last week against Khaled Misha'al, chairman of the Hamas politburo, is the latest in a series of ill-conceived and stupid decisions the prime minister has made. Netanyahu has violated a sacred code of conduct by authorising the assassination attempt in Jordan, the country whose sacrifices for peace have yet to be matched in the region, whose record in fighting terrorism is beyond the reach of even Israel itself.

Jordan had many options in dealing with this infringement on its sovereignty. But it chose the path that best serves its interests and minimises the damage Netanyahu is consistently inflicting on the cause of peace. It saved Misha'al's life, gave the world yet another example of its balanced and wise policies and left Netanyahu to grapple with the consequences of his shameful deed. The message that came out of Jordan is that it will allow no one to threaten its stability, to encroach on its sovereignty, to harm its citizens and to kill the peace process.

In contrast, what Netanyahu did was try to export terrorism to a friendly country, jeopardise the aspirations of his people for a peaceful life and show the world and his people that he could not be trusted with the fate of the peace process.

It is now up to the Israeli people and the international community to prevent Netanyahu from denying the Middle East the peace for which it has long yearned. The Israeli people have witnessed firsthand the genuineness of the peace which Jordan is trying to build with them. They have also seen what Netanyahu can do to deny them the chance of keeping that peace and expanding it to include others in the region. Peace is a cause worth fighting for. The Israelis who want that peace cannot have a more worthy fight than to stand up to Netanyahu and abort what he is trying to do to them.

So must the United States act on what appears to be its conviction that neither it nor the Arab countries can do business with the Likud leader. The balance of world power has made the U.S. the only country with enough leverage to effectively influence the peace process. Washington can and must exert pressure to protect its interests and those of the people of the Middle East. Netanyahu has revealed all the cards up his sleeves. These are cards with which no one can play. With Netanyahu, there can simply be no game to play.

As Labour MK Dalia Itzik observed recently, "the fatal combination of arrogance, inexperience and obtuseness that characterises Netanyahu's actions came to a head in this operation (the attack on Misha'al)." The world should not have to live with his policies.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Yasser Abu Hilaleh, commenting on a recent major oil deal between France and Iran worth more than \$2 billion, said the deal posed the first major challenge by a Western country to the U.S. Abu Hilaleh said Washington had warned that it would impose a boycott on any company which concludes deals worth more than \$40 million with Iran or Libya. But Europe, and particularly France, reject such threats and do not accept American hegemony on their companies, he said. The writer added that the French company, Total, has defied the U.S. threats following the example of Russia which concluded major oil deals with Iran. The Arab countries, which are linked to Iran historically, culturally and religiously, should follow France's lead and arrive at economic agreements with the Islamic republic that are their interest and thus defy the U.S. blockade imposed on Iran and the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq and reject American hegemony outright, Abu Hilaleh said. Saying that the U.S. has been striving to weaken the Arab and Islamic World through its threats of sanctions and boycotts and is pursuing its own selfish interests, the writer said the Arab countries have all the right to pursue their own interests as well.

View from Fourth Circle

The real, historic dangers, opportunities in the Middle East

By Rami G. Khouri

CLOAK-AND-dagger-style assassination attempts, urban car chases, midnight releases from jail, rumours of detainee swaps, and on-again, off-again diplomatic negotiations dominate the news headlines in the Middle East these days — but don't be fooled, for the real contours of our region's history are to be found elsewhere.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has become almost marginal to most Middle Easterners by any measure of accounting, and appears to be inching towards a clumsy compromise that promises to fully satisfy no single party. It is possible that the sort of Arab-Israeli peace being negotiated these days will be a replay of two other flawed peace accords in recent memory — the U.S.-Vietnamese peace treaty of 1973, and the May 1993 Lebanon-Israel accord. Both unravelled or were never implemented, because they did not achieve a balanced and fair compromise; rather, they institutionalised the prevailing power imbalances and chronic humiliations that plagued one of the key parties. The Arab-Israeli peace process may follow a similar route, though I personally hope that things will not prove so gloomy.

The more interesting trend these days throughout the Middle East, especially in the Levant area, is how so many people from all walks of life appear to have put the Arab-Israeli conflict aside or even behind them, in terms of their day-to-day preoccupations. This is not because they feel it has been resolved — rather, they feel it is unlikely to be resolved fairly, and so more and more people in the region focus their energies on equally pressing but more attainable issues.

Consequently, and broadly speaking, Arab passions are steadily subsiding over traditionally hot and often humiliating issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and the encounter with Western imperialism and colonial powers. The main issues that drive ordinary people's concerns and mobilise them politically are domestic, often very local — issues about social and legal equity, economic well-being, family security, personal respect and freedoms, and a wide sense of human dignity. The pressing power relationship on the minds of most ordinary Arabs, I would suggest, is not vis-a-vis Israel or Western powers, but rather vis-a-vis our own central governments and domestic political powers.

Three Arab countries are particularly worth watching in this respect — Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. They may offer a glimpse into whether domestic political attitudes are likely to promote future political stability or turbulence in this region. All three countries have opened up

sufficient political space for the free expression of ideas, ideologies and identities, and what we witness in these lands is instructive.

In Lebanon, the former leader of the Hizbollah organisation, Sheikh Subhi Tufaili, has launched a civil disobedience drive that he calls "the revolt of the hungry." His mass movement, centred on the economically depressed Bekaa Valley and Hermel regions, aims to check the deterioration in many Lebanese people's living standards and basic education, health and employment conditions. Even the rightist Phalangist leader Karim Pakradouni has warned that the Lebanese government's focus on laissez-faire economics and its lack of attention to rising poverty threaten to spark massive social and political unrest. He has warned that the continuing shrinkage of the Lebanese middle class and the advent of 30 per cent of the population living in poverty are promoting anger and disillusionment that are not confined to the Shi'a poor, but also plague other Lebanese Muslims and Christians. An estimated 200,000 people are impacted by the economic recession in the Baalbek-Hermel areas in Lebanon.

In Egypt, a potential mass movement against the government has been sparked by the implementation of a new law that lifts long-standing rent controls on agricultural land. The law allows landowners to renew their leases with tenant farmers on terms much more favourable to the land owners, or to terminate the leases (with compensation) and throw the peasant farmers off lands that they have worked for decades. Violent and peaceful protests against the new law have already resulted in deaths, injuries and imprisonment. Up to five million Egyptians may feel the consequences of the new land law.

In Jordan, a combination of stringent economic adjustment policies, the still controversial peace accord with Israel, and increasingly vocal concerns about the quality of political liberalisation has sparked a potentially powerful but still slightly diffused opposition coalition comprising leftists, pan-Arab nationalists, Islamists and Transjordanian nationalists. About 20 per cent of Jordanians are thought to live at or below the poverty line.

Not surprisingly, the expressions of discontent and fear by ordinary Lebanese, Jordanians and Egyptians have generated economic and political resistance that is being tapped by a new breed of political activists in all three countries. Coincidentally, also in all three states the International Monetary Fund and World Bank continue to issue upbeat reports on the potential benefits of impressive macro-economic adjustment. Expressing the com-

mon dilemma that their central governments can rarely call on built-in majorities in their national parliaments, opposition forces in all three states are attempting to mobilise new constituencies comprising alliances of economically poor, the socially marginalised and politically discontented.

At stake here is not only the immediate material well-being of citizens and their families, but also the law-based political cultures based on foundations of respect, trust, dialogue, and consensus-building, though all three states enjoy open, democratising political systems that permit public expression of opposing state policies, the three systems have also repeatedly failed to achieve workable compromises on important domestic socio-economic issues such as food subsidies, employment, education, medical care, low-cost housing and other such basic needs issues.

The slow shift in people's concerns at the grass-roots level from Israel and imperialism to bread and jobs is now the single greatest test of these and other Arab states' political capacity to respond to their citizens' mounting concerns in an effective, peaceful and sustained manner. The worst-case scenario danger is that continued tension and stalemate in addressing real-life socio-economic needs may result in corrosion in political trust, discrediting of democratic pluralism, widening disparities in living standards and political power, and polarisation of society into bitter and violent camps of haves and have-nots. The corresponding opportunity is to accept the expressions of discontent as genuine manifestations of real, indigenous concerns by loyal citizens, and to respond to them through a strengthening of democratic consensus-building and the political culture of reasonable compromise and power-sharing.

Algeria, Somalia, Iraq, Sudan and other fractured Arab states stand as frightening reminders of what can happen when the opportunity is missed and the danger is activated — when power elites and political systems ignore or only pay lip service to the early warning signs of genuine domestic discontent rooted in socio-economic disparity. The real historic events taking place in the Middle East these days are only marginally related to the Arab-Israeli peace-making process that dominates the headlines; they are more centrally anchored in contentious political, social and economic contests and trends within individual countries.

Israel's violations of accords increasingly threaten international peace, security

By Lu'ay Miawer
Al-Kimawi

Following is the fifth (and last) of a series of articles and excerpts from work done for publication in the forthcoming issue of the 1997 Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Laws, London, U.K., dealing with the issue of Israeli civilian settlements in light of recent political developments. The author, who contributed the article to the Jordan Times, is a law doctoral researcher in regulation of Arab securities markets and a Tutorial Fellow and part-time teacher of international law at the London School of Economics, University of London.

ARMED WITH the major concessions it clinched in the Hebron Protocol, the Israeli government on Feb. 26, 1997, unilaterally decided to construct the Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement on the southern hilltop of Arab East Jerusalem (situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem). Its construction was one of the most egregious examples of Israel's violations of the Oslo accords. For the land on which it is being built (2,127 dunums) is situated in the Green Area and belongs to Palestinians from Beit Sahur, Bethlehem, Umm Tuba, Sur Baher and Jabal Al Mukabber.

Ras Al Amoud settlement is yet another recent serious violation of the Oslo accords, especially as it is the first Jewish settlement to be placed among a Palestinian neighbourhood in Arab East Jerusalem (among 11,000 Syrian Palestinian residents).

Resolution ES-10/2 was preceded by General Assembly Resolution 51/223 which was adopted on March 13, 1997. The importance of this resolution stems from the fact that the General Assembly, for the first time in 15 years, held an emergency special session in order to discuss a matter which originally should have been determined by the Security Council. (The Security Council at its 3,747th meeting on March 7, and at its 3,756th meeting on March

21, twice failed to adopt a resolution because of two American vetoes.)

Accordingly, in a letter dated March 31, addressed to the secretary general, the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the U.N. Nasser Ben Hamad Al Khalifah requested an emergency special session of the General Assembly. In his letter, the Qatari representative (who was also acting in his capacity as the chairman of the Arab Group), requested to discuss the "illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied territories." [His request for an emergency special session of the General Assembly was made pursuant to Resolution 337A (V) of Nov. 3, 1950, entitled "Uniting for Peace Resolution".] In a subsequent note, dated April 22, 1997, the secretary general informed member states that the majority of states had concurred with Qatar's request. Accordingly, the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was scheduled to be held on April 24, 1997.

Resolution ES-10/2 was adopted by a majority of 134 votes to 3 (Israel, Micronesia and the United States of America). Eleven countries abstained: Australia, Germany, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Norway, Romania, Rwanda, Uruguay. The relevance of this resolution lies in the fact that it represents the international community's view in post-Oslo era. The speeches delivered during the plenary sessions on April 24 and 25, 1997, provided insight into the continued condemnatory attitude of the international community and its rejection of unilateral Israeli actions.

In his speech, the EU representative stated that the European Union has taken note of the unilateral Israeli actions and that it "disapproves" of these facts as they violate the 1949 Fourth Convention and "prejudices the outcome of the final status negotiations." The representative of Peru also stated that the eastern zone of Jerusalem is protected by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 252 (1968) and 338 (1973),

"which determined that Israel can have no sovereignty over those territories." The representative of New Zealand stressed that his country does not "recognise Israel's annexation of Jerusalem," that the Israeli settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim "is inconsistent with international law" and that New Zealand regards Israeli settlements activities in the occupied territories "as a clear example of a policy which undermines the peace process and prejudices the option of peace."

In its meeting which was held in April, the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted (on April 14, 1997) a resolution which called upon Israel to refrain from settlement activities because they alter the facts on the ground and preempt the final status negotiations. Resolution ES-10/2 is highly significant with regards to the issue of settlements for the following reasons:

1. It reaffirmed that all post-1967 Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and an obstacle to peace (Paragraph 3).

2. It reaffirmed that Israeli legislative and administrative measures which intend to change the demographic composition of Jerusalem or its legal status are "null and void and have no validity whatsoever" (Paragraph 2).

3. It demanded that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention to all the occupied territories (Paragraph 5).

4. It stressed the need for maintaining the territorial integrity of all of the occupied territory (Paragraph 6).

Its continued failure to comply with relevant United Nations resolutions; constitutes a "threat to international peace and security."

In the report he submitted before the General Assembly in June 1997, the secretary general of the United Nations reported that "the Abu Ghneim incident is viewed as particularly serious for a number of reasons..." He cited political, geographic, demographic and economic reasons. Politically, it "represents the first move to construct an entirely new settlement on occupied Palestinian lands since a freeze was imposed on such activities by the previous Israeli government in the context of the peace process." Geographically, it "represents a final link in a chain of settlements constructed by Israel around occupied Arab East Jerusalem."

Demographically, it would have a "significant effect on further advancing the forced alteration of the religious and ethnic composition of occupied Arab East Jerusalem." Economically, it was "expected to have a damaging effect on an already devastated Palestinian economy in the occupied territories."

To conclude, if one were to counter continuing Israeli settlements activities, one could point to the preambles of the DoP, the Cairo Agreement and Oslo II, where it was clearly stated that the eventual permanent settlement was expected to be based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Needless to say, Paragraph 5 of Article XXIII (Final Clauses) of the Cairo Agreement and Paragraph 6 of Article XXXI (Final Clauses) of Oslo II plainly state that nothing in the agreement shall prejudice or preempt the outcome of negotiations on the interim or permanent status. Moreover, they further add that neither party shall be deemed, by virtue of having entered into these agreements, to have renounced its existing rights, claims or positions. Furthermore, the recent important deliberations before the General Assembly in its 10th emergency special session point

clearly to the applicability of international law regarding the illegality of Israeli settlements.

Having said the above, I would like to conclude with the following caveats: International treaties are often reflections of the balance of power between the parties concerned. They only represent just disposition of duties and obligations when the balance of power approaches equilibrium. In the absence of this balance, it is often indulgence in foolishness to expect an orderly conduct of symmetrical relations.

To a very large extent, the Oslo accords are emblematic of the larger picture of Arab ineptness and farcical divisions. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ability to successfully steer the whole process for Israel's benefit (under the noses of all Arab leaders, despite all the misleading pretensions) is the clearest manifestation of Arabs' seemingly fatalistic weakness. [In this respect, notice the term "redemption," instead of "withdrawal," and that in Netanyahu's speech before the Knesset in January 1997, he stated that it was a redeployment "in" Hebron, as opposed to redeployment "from" Hebron.] Allied to these creeping regressions is the international community's gradual validation of whatever "bilateral" agreements struck between Israel and the Palestinians.

It is true that it does not need much legal dexterity to realise that laws of occupation proscribe Israel from establishing settlements and confiscating Arab lands. (The 1907 Hague Regulations, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the 1977 First Geneva Protocol all enjoin Israel from depopulating the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the occupied Arab Golan Heights.) Yet, I would warn that the Oslo accords are denuding pro-Arab legal arguments from the full cover of international law. For not only has the latest Hebron Protocol of January 1997 severely emasculated the Arab legal position, it also set a dangerous legal precedent which is institutionalising and "legalising"

military Israeli presence in the settlements, and hence, over large chunks of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This same protocol, I would argue, has also shifted the agenda firmly into fulfilling the Likud dictates: bilateral negotiations with divided Arab partners; the principle of reciprocity from the Palestinian side, with its almost impossible application; one-dimensional security "cooperation" from the Palestinians in an ominous replica of the Lahad paradigm in Lebanon; volitional and exclusive Israeli definitions of the scale, time and place of its future redeployments; etc.

The most conspicuous argument is that the Oslo accords did not mention, even once, any notion of future Palestinian sovereignty or statehood, while ascribing to Israeli settlements the attributes of complete Israeli territories.

These accords are practically enshrining and entrenching Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in a manner which blatantly exceeds the extra-territorial privileges of Israeli laws over Israeli citizens. The evident inconsistencies of the accords are manifest. Israel still retains a unitary and indivisible sovereign control over the whole of the territories (i.e., external defence, foreign relations, border control, right of entry, size of local police, etc.) while, on the other hand, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been fragmented in terms of degree of Palestinian control over Areas A, B and C. Moreover, after careful examination of the accords signed so far, I could also say that I have not found a single reference to future Palestinian sovereign territorial rights. Under the current framework, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are also being dissected (jurisdictionally, demographically, geo-politically, infra-structurally, logistically, economically, ethnically) in a manner which renders meaningless the so-called permanent-status negotiations.

Christian

Yassin arrives in Gaza

Mossad fiasco ends



Leaders of the churches of the Middle East waiting at Beirut airport to greet Pope John Paul as the start of his Lebanon visit last May. The Pope made a plea for Christians not to desert the region (Photo by Robert Fisk)

Christians of the Arab World flee their biblical homeland

The Christians of the Middle East are making an unprecedented exodus from the lands in which their ancestors have lived since Christ taught here. At least two million are estimated to have left in the past five years alone, leaving only 12 million Christians in and around the lands of the Bible. And, as Robert Fisk reports from Beirut, half the entire million-strong Christian population of the Arab World's most moderate state have departed in just 20 years.

WHEN I walked into Father Michel Awit's office in the Christian Maronite Patriarchate recently, two middle-aged ladies were seeking his help. Could he call a Western embassy and help them obtain a visa to leave Lebanon? They were pleading with him. "What can I do?" he asked me, raising his shoulders in despair. "I do not want them to go — but I must help them." Everyday, the Christians drift up to the great stone palace of Cardinal Nassrallah Sfeir above Beirut to appeal for assistance in leaving the land in which their forebears have lived for two millennia.

Fr. Michel fully understands the tragedy. He is the historian of Lebanon's Maronites — who are affiliated to the Roman Catholic church — and knows all too well that since the start of the country's 1975-90 civil war, the nation has hemorrhaged its Christian population. "We were a little more than a million before the war but we have lost 500,000 of our people in 22 years," he says. "The Maronites love liberty and freedom. When a Christian here sees that liberty is infringed upon, he becomes angry."

Whether or not liberties are in danger is a matter of fierce debate in Syrian-dominated Lebanon. But the disaster overwhelming the Maronite community in the country — one that Muslims suggest is, of their own making — is mirrored elsewhere in the Middle East. Egypt's six million Christian Copts are leaving their country in tens of thousands — the community is "holding its own" by breeding as fast as its population leaves and still stands at six million, about 10 per cent of the population. But Christians are increasingly a target for Islamists opposed to the government in Cairo — 25 of the 77 Egyptians murdered since February have been Christian villagers in Upper Egypt — while the regime insists that even the repair of churches must receive official permission.

In Iraq, at least 50,000 Assyrian Christians left in the immediate aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war, many of them to the United States. This exodus — which still brings thousands of Christians to the Turkish and Iranian borders — was caused partly by the harshness of U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Church authorities in Jerusalem, where scarcely two per cent of the population are now Christian, lay the blame for their own plight on the Israelis and on U.S. government support for Israel. "The Christian fundamentalists in the U.S. support the idea of Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel," a church official told me recently. "And the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem is the easiest place for a Palestinian to get a visa to America. Isn't that strange? Of course, the Palestinian Christians are very grateful to receive those visas. But it reduces both the Palestinian population of the city and the Christian population at the same time."

The Rev. Lewis Scudder, assistant to the general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches in Cyprus, admits that while there are no official statistics of the Christian exodus, "we know it is happening — and it is an anxiety in the church because it is the young who are leaving. And if they go, where is the next generation of adults?" Ironically — given the Lebanese

Maronite distrust of Syria — Mr. Scudder says that the only Arab state in which the Christians are maintaining their normal presence is Syria. "It remains a secular society and they feel part of the society — the state broadcasts Christian and Easter services on television," he says.

One reason may be President Hafez Assad's ruthless suppression of the Muslim rebellion in the Syrian city of Hama 1982, a bloodbath that Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak has so far shrunk from visiting upon his own enemies. But, Fr. Michel says Maronites are still leaving Syria, if not in the same numbers as their co-religionists in Lebanon.

Mr. Scudder believes that the exodus is partly caused by socio-economic improvements and mobility among the Middle East's middle-class Christians rather than persecution — and the pro-Iranian Hizbollah leader in Lebanon, Sayed Hassan Nassrallah, is on good terms with the Maronite cardinal whom he has visited at Bkerke — but Lebanese Maronites are not so sure.

They say that under Syria's power, Lebanon's elections are a sham and its Christian parliamentary deputies and minister — under the national pact, the president is always a Maronite — are

THE BELIEVERS

Egypt: Population about 60 million, of whom about 10 per cent are Christian, mostly Copts.

Iraq: About 3 per cent of the 18 million population are Christians, including Chaldean rite Catholics, Assyrians and Syrian Orthodox.

Israel: Population about 5 million, of whom 128,000 are Christian, though this includes the whole of Jerusalem.

Occupied territories and Gaza: Population about 2.5 million. Christians are few in Gaza, and about 3 per cent on the West Bank, mostly Greek Orthodox or Catholic.

Jordan: Population 4.5 million, of whom about 3 per cent are Christians.

Lebanon: The 3 million population is about 65 per cent are Muslim and 35 per cent Christian, most of them Maronite Catholics.

Syria: No official statistics. It is thought about 10 per cent of Syria's 13 million are Christian, mostly of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

in effect stooges of Damascus. Yet the Christians are not entirely blameless. It was the Christian Falange militia which started the civil war in 1975 and it was a Christian president who invit-

ed Syrian troops to restore order a year later. It was a Christian Maronite general, Michel Aoun, who declared himself president and began a hopeless war of "independence" against Syria. When the Pope visited Lebanon in May, he urged Christians to stay because, he promised, there would be liberty in the future. A likely story, the Maronites thought.

Emir Hares Chehab, general secretary of the Lebanese Islamic-Christian national dialogue committee, takes a more historic view. "We Lebanese Christians are Arabs and we were Christians here for 700 years before Arabs became Muslims. The church of Antioch was the first church of Christ. Since Muslims came here 14 centuries ago, we have lived in coexistence with them. But things are changing. If we are now few in number, Islam is different from what it used to be. Islam now has a character that comes from Pakistan and Indonesia and Malaysia and Africa. The Arabs are becoming a minority in Islam."

The Independent

Yassin arrives in Gaza to a hero's welcome, says Hamas is pro-peace

(Continued from page 1)

good of the future of the coming generations.

"We tell the Israeli prime minister that power will not last on his side. The weak will not remain weak. He [Netanyahu] has to read history and look into the future. They (the Israelis) have to recognise our rights in our homeland. The future is for our and their children," he said.

The sheikh declined comment on the release of the two Israelis, who were involved in the attack against Mr. Misha'al.

The Director General of the KHAM Major General Adel Shraideh told the Jordan Times that Sheikh Yassin has undergone a surgery in his left eye and that he was in good health.

Gen. Shraideh said that a hearing device "was provided for the sheikh to improve his hearing ability."

He added that two Jordanian physiotherapists accompanied the Hamas leader to Gaza to extend

more treatment and that they will remain there for an unlimited period of time.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Yassin, returned to Gaza on Monday to an ecstatic welcome by thousands of Palestinians.

Hamas proclaimed a victory for its campaign of resistance against Israel, while the PNA said Sheikh Yassin's return would strengthen unity behind the "choice for peace" with Israel.

After arriving by Jordanian helicopter from Amman at Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Gaza headquarters, the ailing 61-year-old Hamas founder was taken to a Gaza stadium where he addressed a crowd of over 15,000 Palestinians celebrating his return to his homeland.

There he made a call for Palestinian unity and for all political factions to work for the release of some 3,000 Palestinian political prisoners still held by Israel.

"I call on our strong people to stand as one body, with no difference between left and right, large and small," Sheikh Yassin said to cries of "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great) from the crowds.

"We are all one people and we will remain so despite the attempts of our enemies," said the spiritual leader.

Sheikh Yassin, 61, who was sentenced to life imprisonment by Israel in 1989, founded Hamas in 1987, and the movement has conducted most anti-Israeli attacks since 1994.

With its call for violent resistance against Israel until the liberation of occupied territories, Hamas has emerged as the chief political rival of the PNA.

"On this day, Hamas represents a blow against the security of Israel. We will continue our holy struggle until Palestine is liberated," Hamas official Abdul Aziz Rantisi told the rally in Gaza.

At the stadium's entrance, Hamas military

wing, the Izzeddine Al Qassam brigade, which conducts Hamas's bombings, stretched a banner reading: "We renew our oath and loyalty to the holy warrior Sheikh Ahmad Yassin."

But Palestinian officials insisted Sheikh Yassin would promote moderation in Hamas and boost reconciliation with the PNA, which has in the past weeks arrested over 80 Hamas members in an Israeli pressured crackdown to stop attacks.

Sheikh Yassin's return "will have a positive effect both on Palestinian unity and the choice of peace which the Palestinian people have taken," said Arafat aide Tayeb Abdul Rahim.

In his speech to the rally, Mr. Abdul Rahim called Sheikh Yassin "a pillar of support for Palestinian unity and with [his] presence unity will be even stronger and more durable."

When his helicopter landed, his wife Halima

and President Arafat's wife Suha approached hand in hand to greet him, but the ailing sheikh had to be rushed away when a mob of well-wishers surged towards him.

Once at the stadium, Sheikh Yassin had to be lifted up in his wheelchair by bodyguards to wade through the crowds to the stage.

After the rally, hundreds of hardcore followers gathered near the Hamas spiritual leader's modest one-storey home in Gaza's rundown Sabra quarter, and many of them lined up to kiss the sheikh's cheeks and receive his blessing.

Israel has justified its decision to release an enemy who has never renounced armed struggle against it by saying the sheikh's health was rapidly failing and it was feared he could die in prison.

But after a trying day of travel and hectic public appearances, Sheikh Yassin still appeared smiling and alert.

Netanyahu unrepentant over attack on Misha'al, sets up commission to present him with recommendations

(Continued from page 1)

to Israel the two agents who were arrested over the attack.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has come under fire for presumably approving the operation by Israel's Mossad spy agency in which two agents attempted to assassinate the Hamas leader in Amman on September 25.

Mr. Netanyahu said he took "general responsibility" for the actions of Mossad, but he refused to respond to calls for his resignation and insisted the Amman operation was "the right thing for the right reasons."

Meanwhile, in a further fall-out from the debacle, Israel confirmed that it would release up to 50 more Palestinian prisoners in a deal with Jordan which already led to Israel's release of Hamas's spiritual leader and founder, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, and 20 other Palestinian prisoners on Monday.

Mr. Netanyahu said the three-man investigation would be held behind closed doors, led by the former legal adviser of the defence ministry Yosef Chekhanover, and including former Mossad head Nahum Admoni.

"The commission will report on its work to the cabinet and give its recommendations," he said.

But Israeli press commentators were quick to dismiss the committee as a dodge by Prime Minister Netanyahu to reduce the political heat against him from the affair.

"By calling this commission, Netanyahu is trying to

avoid having the investigation touch him or the head of Mossad," said a commentator for Israeli army radio.

Mr. Netanyahu's office called the body a "clarification" rather than "investigation" commission and Israeli television noted it would not have the full powers of an official government investigation.

Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Monday that Mr. Netanyahu twice this year spurned his pleas to free ailing Hamas leader Sheikh Yassin, released last week and flown from Jordan to a hero's welcome in Gaza on Monday.

Mr. Kahalani said the international firestorm over the attack on Jordanian soil would not deter Israel from future assassination bids against resistance leaders "wherever they are."

Asked by Israel radio's English-language service if the wheelchair-bound Sheikh Yassin, 61, was freed in order to ensure the return to Israel of the two agents, widely believed to be members of the Mossad intelligence service, Mr. Kahalani said: "Yes, this was part of the agreement."

Mr. Kahalani added: "We are happy to see our two guys back in Israel. This is a solution, this part of the agreement."

Twenty prisoners freed from Israeli jails were on their way to homes in the West Bank and Jordan he said.

He said he was "happy" to see Sheikh Yassin out of prison. He said he had

backed his release in the past to head off Palestinian backlash were the paralysed cleric to die in custody.

"It was my recommendation to release him a year ago, and a half year ago, and at that time I tried to convince the prime minister to do it."

But Mr. Kahalani insisted the furor would not keep Israel from future attempts to kill suspected resistance chiefs.

"We cabinet ministers should think about that in the future, find the way how to destroy those people who want to have terror on Israel. We are not going to close our hands from finding those people and killing them wherever they are," he said.

Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon told the press conference that Israel would release "40 to 50 more Palestinians in the next two weeks."

He underlined that those released would "not be members of Hamas and do not have Israeli blood on their hands."

It was Mr. Sharon who Mr. Netanyahu quickly dispatched to Jordan in the wake of the assassination attempt in a bid to contain the diplomatic damage. After meeting King Hussein, Mr. Sharon worked out the prisoner release deals.

Aside from disillusioning King Hussein, the attack also angered Canada, which recalled its ambassador to Israel for consultations after it was revealed that the two assassins were posing as Canadian nationals.

Mossad fiasco ends with release of Jordanian prisoners, Israeli agents

(Continued from page 1)

separate from comprehensive and just peace," the statement added.

The statement said that these developments have come as a result of His Majesty King Hussein's efforts which saved the life of Mr. Misha'al. Hamas politburo chief, the release of Sheikh Yassin and his return to his family in Gaza

and the release of all Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails.

The statement added that among the achievements is the release of many Palestinian detainees, including a large number of Hamas activists.

Hamas former politburo chief Musa Abu Marzouk said that his group "regrets the release of the two Mossad agents."

Israel on Sunday said that Sheikh Yassin would not be allowed back in Gaza until the two suspected agents were released by Jordan.

Hamas leaders denied that they were involved in secret negotiations with Israel.

"I confirm from our side, from Hamas, we are not part of any deal," Mr. Misha'al told Reuters in Amman.

A spokesman of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan denounced the release of the two Mossad agents and said that the two should have been tried in Jordan for their role in the assassination attempt against Mr. Misha'al.

"It is clear that there is a deal between Jordan and Israel," Jamil Abu Bakir, member of the executive council of the Brotherhood,

said.

"The two agents should be punished in Jordan to prevent Israel from repeating such a crime. This act is an abuse to Jordan's sovereignty and the peace treaties they signed with Jordan," Mr. Abu Bakir told reporters following the lift-off of the helicopter carrying Sheikh Yassin home to Gaza.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic

AFM registers JD77.8m of Arab, foreign investments during nine months

ARAB AND foreign investments flowing into the Amman Financial Market (AFM) amounted to JD77.8 million during the first nine months of this year. But after taking into consideration JD23.8 million worth of shares sold by non-Jordanians during the January-September period, the net position boils down to JD54 million of Arab and foreign investments compared to JD4.2 million of such investments during the same period of 1996.

During the month of September alone, investments by non-Jordanians reached JD17.5 million, JD15.4 million higher than the amount recorded during the same month of last year. The amount of shares sold by Arab and foreign investors last month was JD6 million compared to JD2.5 million during September 1996. As such, the net position for last month was an investment inflow totalling JD11.5 million compared to a JD0.4 million outflow from the stock exchange during September 1996.

Of the JD17.5 million of non-Jordanian investments during last month, JD7.2 million or 41 per cent were purchases by Arab investors. The remaining JD10.3 million or 59 per cent were purchases by foreign investors. Sales of shares by Arabs amounted to JD1.5 million (about

25 per cent) and by foreigners to JD4.5 million (about 75 per cent).

Meanwhile, the representative of the French bank Société Générale said that a \$50 million investment fund was to have been set up by Moody under the name Société Générale Arab Fund. The representative, Walid Irshaid, indicated that the fund aims at investing in shares of companies listed on some of the Arab bourses like Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain and Oman.

He said there is a possibility to raise the size of the fund to \$100 million or \$150 million in the future noting that the fund also aims at investing in companies not listed on the bourses mentioned as long as the volume does not exceed 40 per cent of the fund's total investment. He added that the fund will also be looking for investment opportunities in other Arab markets like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

Subscription to the fund will continue until Nov. 30, 1997, Mr. Irshaid said, adding that the fund will be managed by Société Générale Emerging Europe Asset Management Ltd. in London. This entity is a subsidiary of the bank specialising in managing capital funds and investment funds associated with Société Générale (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

Khasawneh: Infrastructure construction is being speeded up in Aqaba

By Isam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times

AQABA — Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Faysal Khasawneh said Monday that infrastructure construction is being speeded up to enable major projects to be set up at Aqaba's Ras Yemeh and Qabous beaches. He noted that the projects are estimated to cost about JD 1 billion.

with British Construction Minister Nick Raynsford. Dr. Khasawneh said he expects Aqaba to witness the implementation of industry and tourism projects in the coming year.

Kuwaiti and Qatari investors have already selected sites on the southern beach of Aqaba for the construction of four hotels estimated at JD120 million and a memorandum of understanding has been signed with the

Kuwaiti investor Ghazi Al Saqabi who chose a plot of land where he intends to set up two hotels costing nearly JD60 million, according to Dr. Khasawneh.

He said that Mr. Saqabi has plans to invest \$200 million in tourist projects to be carried out at the Dead Sea and Aqaba shores.

As to the infrastructure schemes along the beach, Dr. Khasawneh said, they will be ready by the time the hotel

projects are ready for implementation.

He indicated that many local, Arab and foreign investors are interested in setting up hotels, tourist villages and restaurants on nearly 160 dunums of land. The tourist village alone is expected to cost JD100 million.

Dr. Khasawneh invited industrialists to set up industrial projects on a specially selected 2,700 dunums of

land assigned for industrial purposes within the Aqaba region.

Noting that the projects are attracting more people to settle in Aqaba, Dr. Khasawneh said that ARA has made plans for the construction of 5,000 housing units to meet the growing demand. He concluded by noting that the transformation of Aqaba into a free trade zone will occur in stages.



SIGNING AGREEMENT: Planning Minister Rima Khalaf and Jean Lewis, head of the Middle East Projects Department at the European Investment Bank, Monday sign an agreement extending the government of Jordan a 30 million European Currency Units loan. The loan will be spent on establishing two industrial wharfs in Aqaba (Petra photo)

Arab states puff away \$60m a year

DUBAI (AFP) — The Gulf Arab monarchies consume more than \$60 million worth of tobacco each year, according to official statistics published by the press in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with a combined population of 23 million people, smoke more than 28 billion cigarettes each year, according to the figures. The Gulf countries have recently embarked on a campaign to cut down on smoking, by raising taxes on cigarettes by between 50 and 100 per cent.

Company to recycle waste organic materials launched

AMMAN (Petra) — An agreement was signed in Amman Monday for the construction of a plant to process livestock manure and left-overs after the slaughtering of poultry and cattle to produce organic fertilisers which suit the soil and agricultural products in Jordan.

Under the agreement, the Technological and Industrial Group (TIG) will build the plant for the Jordan International Industries Company (JIIC) at the cost of JD1 million.

JIIC Board Chairman Sami Gammoh said the plant, the first of its kind in Jordan, will be set up at Qasr Al Hallabat district in Dulaib northeast of Amman.


He added that the plant's output of processed and sterilised fertilisers would be safe for trees, vegetables and soil, especially in the Jordan Valley, noting that the new fertiliser is bound to reduce dependence on chemical fertilisers and pesticides which have negative effect on human health, the soil and the environment.

In addition, the new fertiliser is expected to contribute also to the elimination of commo flies and other insects that have been infesting the valley.

Pointing out that the new fertiliser has been proved to have increased agricultural output, Mr. Gammoh indicated that its ingredients would be locally produced and, as such, help save the country hard currency that used to be spent on importing fertilisers.

Noting that the plant is expected to create 150 job opportunities, Mr. Gammoh pointed out that once the plant has been established his company plans to build a similar one in Qatraneh in southern Jordan.

REUTERS											
The Business of Information											
Major Currencies & Cross Rates											
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	YEN	DM	DM	DM
US Dollar	1.7805	0.6196	1.4510	121.75	1.3707	1725.00	1.9834	5.9202			
DE Mark	0.5680		0.3518	0.8240	89.12	0.7781	978.85	1.1264	3.3814		
GB Sterling	1.6140	2.8435		2.3416	196.42	2.2123	2785.42	3.2008	9.5540		
CH Franc	0.6892	121.25	0.4285		83.87	0.9440	1188.71	136.84	4.8769		
JP Yen	0.0082	1.4454	0.5084	1.1913		1.1254	14.17	162.82	4.8801		
CA Dollar	0.7298	1.2816	0.4510	1.0570	1.13		1258.40	1.4433	4.3103		
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0190	0.3585	0.0040	142.00	0.7934		11.86	3.4555		
NL Guilder	0.5042	88.74	0.3122	73.17	81.35	0.6909	870.10		2.5640		
FR Franc	0.1689	0.2973	0.1046	24.5027	20.54	0.2315	33.48	33.4800			
Middle Eastern Currencies											
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KWD	AED	LB	EGP		
US Dollar	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6398	0.3043	3.6729	1.536.00	3.3985			
Jordan Dinar	1.4124		5.2973	0.5325	5.1410	0.4297	5.1877	2189.49	4.8001		
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888		0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	404.38	0.9061		
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.9485		9.85	0.8071	9.74	4074.38	0.9148		
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304		0.0836	1.01	422.00	0.9337		
Kuwait Dinar	3.2888	2.3270	12.3270	1.2391	11.98		12.07	5048.48	0.9387		
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0208	0.9910	0.0828		418.20	0.9253		
Lebanese/1000	0.85	0.4608	2.4417	0.2454	2.3697	0.1961	2.3912		2.2128		
Egyptian	0.2942	0.2083	1.1036	0.1109	1.0710	0.0895	1.0807	451.98			
Energy											
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit
Brent	21.43	21.55									
W. Texas	22.24	22.74									
Bonny	21.43	21.55									
Dubai	20.15	19.20									
UL Gas	199.00	197.00									
Mid-East Currencies											
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KWD	AED	LB	EGP		
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.1888		0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	404.38	0.9061		
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0208	0.9910	0.0828		418.20	0.9253		
KW Dinar	3.2888	2.3270	12.3270	1.2391	11.98		12.07	5048.48	0.9387		
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.1928	1.0211	1.0208	0.9910	0.0828		418.20	0.9253		
CY Pound	1.9129	3.2677	1.1846	2.7756	232.57						
Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)											
Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year	15 Year	20 Year
USD	5.57	5.58	5.57	5.78	5.81						
GBP	7.12	7.25	7.19	7.22	7.31						
JPY	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48						
DEM	3.12	3.21	3.44	3.57	3.88						
FRF	3.22	3.30	3.42	3.58	3.69						
CHF	1.30	1.45	1.48	1.88	1.78						
ITL	0.57	0.50	0.50	0.58	0.77						
JOD Cross Rates											
Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year	15 Year	20 Year
US Dollar	0.708	0.710									
GB Sterling	1.428	1.483									
DE Mark	0.4029	0.4049									
CH Franc	0.6885	0.6895									
FR Franc	0.1199	0.1205									
JP Yen	0.5908	0.5937									
NL Guilder	0.3578	0.3594									
IT Lira	0.4104	0.4125									

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SHAKHSANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY											06/10/1997
PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANS.	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
346.000	241.500	ARAB BANK	15.4	1.19	6	220	73880	338.00	335.00	3.00-	
2.240	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	14	8100	15704	1.93	1.94	0.01+	
1.190	0.890	HID. EAST INV. BK.	66.3	0.00	10	3600	3630	97	1.01	0.04+	
2.540	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.9	6.35	15	11800	29491	2.46	2.49	0.03+	
5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.7	3.94	2	2000	9860	4.93	4.93	0.00	
4.180	2.440	JOR. KUWAIT INV.	11.2	0.00	2	1100	1465	3.18	3.15	0.03-	
1.050	0.740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.9	8.54	6	6000	6637	0.80	0.82	0.02+	
3.870	3.450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	17.3	0.00	1	100	360	3.60	3.60	0.00	
4.050	3.520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.1	3.23	22	12634	46973	3.72	3.71	0.01-	
1.530	1.110	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	8	0.00	18	3950	4908	1.22	1.26	0.04+	
2.050	0.890	BEIT AL-HAL (BETHUNA)	8	16.30	1	100	92	0.95	0.92	0.03-	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
2.170	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	7.98	8	2300	4357	1.85	1.88	0.03+	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
2.050	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.13	51	33900	66173	1.92	1.95	0.03+	
4.030	1.320	IBRD ELECTRICITY	23.5	2.92	9	5750	22984	4.00	3.94	0.06-	
1.550	0.930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	4	1250	1675	1.34	1.34	0.00	
1.740	1.150	HID. EAST HOTELS	20.7	0.00	59	24650	35420	1.41	1.36	0.05-	
3.720	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.3	0.00	14	13300	46829	3.55	3.55	0.00	
1.170	0.930	ZAKA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	2150	2074	0.98	0.96	0.02-	
2.230	1.030	UNIFIED CO.	8.5	6.15	5	1550	2781	1.81	1.79	0.02-	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	24.9	2.97	22	12288	45692	3.73	3.70	0.03-	
4.140	3.000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.3	2.69	6	53050	197346	3.72	3.72	0.00	
11.100	9.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	8.12	5	292	3196	10.96	10.95	0.01-	
7.150	5.800	JOR. WOODSTILL MILLS	11.1	2.90	2	1000	5918	6.85	6.90	0.05+	
4.700	3.040	ARAB FINANC. BANK	11.2	0.00	23	9944	45821	4.39	4.61	0.02+	
7.250	5.310	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	5.3	3.85	1	100	520	5.31	5.20	0.11-	
6.000	4.300	DAR ALADNA DV. INV.	14.5	4.24	8	7300	43097	5.85	5.90	0.05+	
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.46	11	3250	7795	2.38	2.39	0.01+	
1.240	0.820	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.0	0.00	15	9958	9958	51	52	0.01+	
1.340	0.790	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	12	6950	7593	0.83	0.87	0.04+	
1.770	1.100	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	2	600	464	0.80	0.79	0.01-	
1.920	1.200	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	9	0.00	1	250	145	0.58	0.58	0.00	
2.970	1.420	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	12.8	7.04	3	750	1067	1.42	1.42	0.00	
1.890	1.320	JOR. SULFUR CHEM.	0	0.00	14	34600	24383	49	49	0.00	
1.670	1.120	ARAB PAPER COV. IND.	16.6	0.00	12	1500	1005	0.67	0.67	0.00	
1.880	1.080	UNIV. MED. IND.	9	21.1	5	1450	1798	1.24	1.24	0.00	
1.460	0.900	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	12.0	11.24	11	3000	2673	90	89	0.01-	
1.620	1.300	NATL. CHEM. INVEST.	14.7	1.0	1	390	101	1.50	1.50	0.00	
1.810	0.70	JOR. NEW CARBON CO.	15	21.46	21	33900	28815	0.85	0.85	0.00	
2.090	1.340	EL - SAY READER WEAR	52.8	0.00	7	1881	2819	1.50	1.50	0.00	
1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.3	0.00	13	15300	17696	1.14	1.16	0.02+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	24.9	2.97	22	12288	45692	3.73	3.70	0.03-	
4.140	3.000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.3	2.69	6	53050	197346	3.72	3.72	0.00	
11.100	9.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	8.12	5	292	3196	10.96	10.95	0.01-	
7.150	5.800	JOR. WOODSTILL MILLS	11.1	2.90	2	1000	5918	6.85	6.90	0.05+	
4.700	3.040	ARAB FINANC. BANK	11.2	0.00	23	9944	45821	4.39	4.61	0.02+	
7.250	5.310	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	5.3	3.85	1	100	520	5.31	5.20	0.11-	
6.000	4.300	DAR ALADNA DV. INV.	14.5	4.24	8	7300	43097	5.85	5.90	0.05+	
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.46	11	3250	7795	2.38	2.39	0.01+	
1.240	0.820	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.0	0.00	15	9958	9958	51	52	0.01+	
1.340	0.790	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	12	6950	7593	0.83	0.87	0.04+	
1.770	1.100	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	2	600	464	0.80	0.79	0.01-	
1.920	1.200	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	9	0.00	1	250	145	0.58	0.58	0.00	
2.970	1.420	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	12.8	7.04	3	750	1067	1.42	1.42	0.00	
1.890	1.320	JOR. SULFUR CHEM.	0	0.00	14	34600	24383	49	49	0.00	
1.670	1.120	ARAB PAPER COV. IND.	16.6	0.00	12	1500	1005	0.67	0.67	0.00	
1.880	1.080	UNIV. MED. IND.	9	21.1	5	1450	1798	1.24	1.24	0.00	
1.460	0.900	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	12.0	11.24	11	3000	2673	90	89	0.01-	
1.620	1.300	NATL. CHEM. INVEST.	14.7	1.0	1	390	101	1.50	1.50	0.00	
1.810	0.70	JOR. NEW CARBON CO.	15	21.46	21	33900	28815	0.85	0.85	0.00	
2.090	1.340	EL - SAY READER WEAR	52.8	0.00	7	1881	2819	1.50	1.50	0.00	
1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.3	0.00	13	15300	17696	1.14	1.16	0.02+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	24.9	2.97	22	12288	45692	3.73	3.70	0.03-	
4.140	3.000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.3	2.69	6	53050	197346	3.72	3.72	0.00	
11.100	9.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	8.12	5	292	3196	10.96	10.95	0.01-	
7.150	5.800	JOR. WOODSTILL MILLS	11.1	2.90	2	1000	5918	6.85	6.90	0.05+	
4.700	3.040	ARAB FINANC. BANK	11.2	0.00	23	9944	45821	4.39	4.61	0.02+	
7.250	5.310	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	5.3	3.85	1	100	520	5.31	5.20	0.11-	
6.000	4.300	DAR ALADNA DV. INV.	14.5	4.24	8	7300	43097	5.85	5.90	0.05+	
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.46	11	3250	7795	2.38	2.39	0.01+	
1.240	0.820	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.0	0.00	15	9958	9958	51	52	0.01+	
1.340	0.790	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	12	6950	7593	0.83	0.87	0.04+	
1.770	1.100	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	2	600	464	0.80	0.79	0.01-	
1.920	1.200	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	9	0.00	1	250	145	0.58	0.58	0.00	
2.970	1.420	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	12.8	7.04	3	750	1067	1.42	1.42	0.00	
1.890	1.320	JOR. SULFUR CHEM.	0	0.00	14	34600	24383	49	49	0.00	
1.670	1.120	ARAB PAPER COV. IND.	16.6	0.00	12	1500	1005	0.67	0.67	0.00	
1.880	1.080	UNIV. MED. IND.	9	21.1	5	1450	1798	1.24	1.24	0.00	
1.460	0.900	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	12.0	11.24	11	3000	2673	90	89	0.01-	
1.620	1.300	NATL. CHEM. INVEST.	14.7	1.0	1	390	101	1.50	1.50	0.00	
1.810	0.70	JOR. NEW CARBON CO.	15	21.46	21	33900	28815	0.85	0.85	0.00	
2.090	1.340	EL - SAY READER WEAR	52.8	0.00	7	1881	2819	1.50	1.50	0.00	
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6.000	4.300	DAR ALADNA DV. INV.	14.5	4.24	8	7300	43097	5.85	5.90	0.05+	
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.46	11	3250	7795	2.38	2.39	0.01+	
1.240	0.820	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.0	0.00	15	9958	9958	51	52	0.01+	
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7.250	5.310	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	5.3	3.85	1	100	520	5.31	5.20	0.11-	
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Hamed in showdown with Badillo

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Double triumph for Noah
as France win Fed Cup

HERTOGENBOSCH, Netherlands (AFP)

France won the Fed Cup here for the first time Sunday, beating the Netherlands 4-1 to give coach Yannick Noah a unique double as he led the men to Davis Cup glory last year.

France had led 2-0 after Saturday's opening singles with Mary Pierce beating Miriam Oremans in straight sets and Sandrine Testud edging Brenda Schultz-McCarthy in three.

The Dutch clawed their way back briefly Sunday as the experienced Schultz-McCarthy beat Pierce 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 before Testud recovered from a first set whitewash to secure the final victory 0-6, 6-3, 6-3 against Oremans.

In the doubles, Nathalie Tauziat and Alexandra Fusai scored a 6-3, 6-4 win in barely half an hour over

Manon Bollegraf and Caroline Vis.

The win was especially sweet for the French as they had failed in eight semi-finals, including four times in a row from 1993, before finally lifting the trophy.

With Pierce having succumbed in her reverse singles, Testud, a 25-year-old from Lyon, emerged as the French hero of the hour.

"I was very nervous, as Mary had had so many chances. Any everyone was counting on me," explained.

But Oremans let her off the hook as she lost serve at the start of the second set, allowing the Frenchwoman to get back in the match. A superb reflex crosscourt volley made it one set-all and a fourth-game break set up Testud's triumph in the decider.

Afterwards, Testud

praised Noah's influence on her game and for having confidence in her.

"That helped me so much. He has always stood by me and is able to transmit his incredible energy. It's fabulous, we've been waiting for this for years," she said.

Noah himself explained: "We thought yesterday (Saturday) we'd wrap things up quickly. Mary had a fantastic match, but then she lost a few important points (against Schultz-McCarthy). And when Sandrine lost the first set 6-0 a few doubts began to creep through. I was afraid we'd blow it."

"All the squad have played a large part in this Fed Cup tournament," Noah added. "And with the youngsters coming along behind them, French women's tennis is in a healthy state."

Newcastle
dumped
me, claims
Keegan

LONDON (AFP) — Kevin Keegan claims in a new book he was forced out of Newcastle and denied a "dignified" exit from the club he had taken from the brink of extinction to European competition in five years.

The former Magpies manager reveals there was no question of him deciding to leave the English Premiership club, rather he was given little option but to go.

"I did not jump, I was pushed. And so abruptly that my salary was cut off immediately," he said.

"My departure from St James Park is a story of broken promises, underhand tactics and shattered dreams."

"When the end came (Newcastle chairman) Sir John Hall was nowhere to be seen."

"I was being forced out of Newcastle United after an extraordinary, five-year rollercoaster ride of success and emotion, and Sir John was at his villa in Spain."

"We have spoken only once since that fateful day — even though we live no more than 300 yards apart — and we may never speak again. I will not call him."

Keegan, 46, admitted that at Christmas last year he was ready to quit because he felt he could no longer motivate his players or himself — and he had become disillusioned with the way the team had become secondary to the pending club flotation.

In his autobiography, serialised in The Sun newspaper, Keegan, now chief operating officer at second division Fulham, said he agreed with board members to stay until the end of the season and he shook hands with chief executive Freddie Fletcher.

But on January 7 Keegan was summoned to a board meeting where he was told that he was an "integral part of the flotation document" and would have to sign a two-year contract or leave straight away.

"I knew what had happened," said Keegan. "The board dared not reveal to the City that I was leaving in the summer. They couldn't lie either, so they panicked."

Juve back to winning ways
as Inter held; Barcelona win

PARIS (AFP) — World club champions Juventus shrugged off their Champions League loss to Manchester United by beating Fiorentina 2-1 in Turin on Sunday while leaders Inter Milan needed a Ronaldo penalty to secure a mediocre 1-1 home draw with Lazio.

Inter's draw left them two points clear in the Serie A ahead of a trio of clubs on 11 points from five games — Roma, Parma and Juventus themselves.

Troubled AC Milan finally got their first win this season when they won 1-0 at newly-promoted Empoli. Swedish substitute Andreas Andersson, a sub for Dutchman Patrick Kluijver, headed Milan's 68th-minute winner after a defensive error.

Fiorentina had the temerity to take the lead against world champions Juve when Brazilian-turned-Belgian Luis Oliveira opened the scoring in the 24th minute.

But two goals in the space of three minutes gave Marcello Lippi's side their winning lead before the break.

Filippo Inzaghi flicked the ball home from close range and then provided an exquisite backheel for Alessandro Del Piero, who scored in the opening seconds on Wednesday night, to chip home.

Argentine Abel Balbo meanwhile blasted a second-half hat-trick as in-form Roma romped home 6-2 against Napoli.

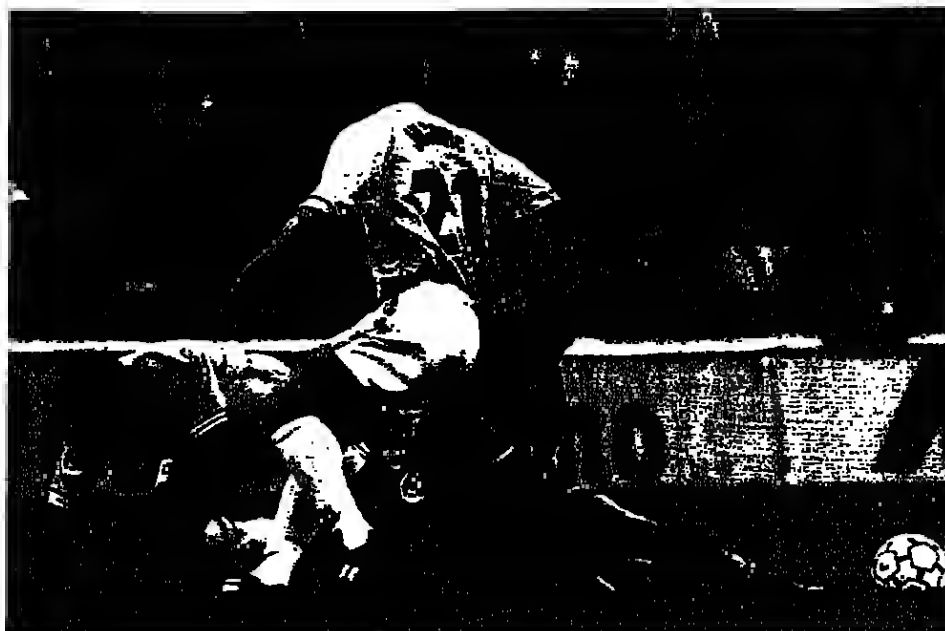
Roma, the revelation of the season under new coach Zdenek Zeman, leapfrogged to second in the table, leading Parma on goals scored.

French defender Vincent Candela and Carmine Gaurieri scored in the first half, Balbo haggled his hat-trick and Eusebio Di Francesco celebrated his surprise call-up for Italy next week by also getting onto the score-sheet.

Balbo's triple strike took him past the 100 goal-mark in the Serie A, his total now standing at 102.

Udinese finished up 3-2 winners over Sampdoria even after their German striker Oliver Bierhoff, who guided the side into the UEFA Cup second round last week, missed a penalty in the 21st minute.

Bierhoff made amends in the 35th minute when he headed Udinese into a 2-1



Stiker Ronaldo (R) from Inter soccer team in action against Lazio defender Vladimir Jugovic (C) and Alessandro Nesta during their match in Milan (Reuters photo)

lead, but it needed Alessandro Pierini's march-winner after Frenchman Alain Boghossian made it 2-2 for Sampdoria just before the break.

Roberto Baggio completed a miserable weekend when he was sent off for retaliation at the end of Bologna's 0-0 draw with Piacenza, a day after being axed from the national squad.

In Spain, two first half goals from Oscar helped Barcelona to a 3-2 victory over Tenerife at the Nou Camp to maintain the Catalan club's perfect start to the league season after five matches.

Barca now stand four-points clear ahead of surprise package Mallorca, who drew 2-2 at Compostela.

But champions Real Madrid lost ground when they could only draw 0-0 at the Bernabeu with Deportivo La Coruna, a result which leaves the Madrilenos fourth behind Celta Vigo, who thrashed Salamanca 4-1, on goal difference.

Cameroon international Jacques Songo'o played a blinder in goal for La Coruna, saving a penalty from Croatian hitman Davor Suker.

Barca's fanatical fans, furious at their side's poor start to the Champions League programme, were still not happy as they greeted the team with a sea of handkerchiefs — always a sure sign of dissatisfaction in Spain.

Coach Louis Van Gaal is

on a hiding to nothing as he strikes to win the title, a triumph which eluded predecessor Bobby Robson last season and which cost Robson his job, despite Cup Winners and domestic cup glory.

After Oscar's opener on seven minutes, Barcelona suddenly found themselves 2-1 behind when Juanele and Pablo Paz netted within four minutes midway through the first period. But Oscar then struck home his second to equalise and Luis Enrique haggled the winner five minutes after the restart.

Elsewhere, 1996 champions Atletico Madrid won 2-0 at Oviedo with goals from Jose Luis Camerino and Christian Vieri, while Valencia got their first points on the board with a 3-0 win at Valladolid.

Both Valladolid and Sporting Gijon, hammered 4-1 at Racing Santander, have no points at all as yet.

In France, Strasbourg followed up their UEFA Cup triumph over Glasgow Rangers handing leaders Metz their first defeat to pull themselves away from the foot of the table thanks to second-half goals from Pascal Nouma and Olivier Dacourt.

Metz dominated the first half, missing several good chances — and eventually paid the price. Their goalkeeper Lionel Letizi failed to hold a 59th-minute cross from Belgian Christophe Kinot and Nouma — suspended for the midweek European match — pounced with a left-foot

drive to open the scoring. Dacourt scored the second with a swerving long-range shot 12 minutes later. Metz still hold a two-point lead over Paris St Germain, who were lacklustre in a 0-0 draw away to Nantes later Sunday.

Paris had several chances, but were woeful in front of goal.

Marco Simone and Florian Maurice both squandered opportunities before halftime and Jerome Leroy hit a post after the break.

In the German Bundesliga, Bayern Munich kept within two points of leaders Kaiserslautern, 3-1 winners at 1860 Munich on Friday, when they beat 10-man VfL Bochum 3-2 on Saturday with a brace from Mario Basler.

However, the champions lost Brazilian striker Giovane Elber for at least a fortnight with a torn thigh muscle.

European champions Borussia Dortmund, who had international midfielder Andreas Moller sent off for foul play, succumbed 3-1 at Arminia Bielefeld — to plunge to third-from-bottom.

Dortmund will be without two key players for their next league match after defender Jurgen Kohler picked up his fifth yellow card this season and Moller was sent off.

On Sunday, German international striker Freddy Bobic celebrated his 100th Bundesliga match with a pair of goals as VfB Stuttgart rallied from 2-1 down to beat Hamburg 5-2.

Orioles advance while Cleveland
cling to hope

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Baltimore reached the American League Championship Series for the second straight year on Sunday, while Cleveland clung to the hope of ousting the World Series champion Yankees.

The Orioles defeated the Mariners 3-1 and closed out the best-of-five division series in four games, limiting the Mariners — who set a major-league record with 264 homers this season — to 11 runs. They await the winner of the other AL division series between the Yankees and Indians.

Omar Vizquel's one-out deflected single in the bottom of the ninth inning scored Marquis Grissom and gave the Indians a stunning 3-2 victory over New York, tying their series at two games apiece.

Vizquel's hit capped a remarkable comeback by the Indians, who were down to their last four outs and facing Yankees All-Star closer Mariano Rivera. Instead, they will host Game Five on Monday night, with the winner advancing to the AL Championship Series against Baltimore.

Grissom led off the ninth

with a bloop single to shallow right-center field off Ramiro Mendoza, who won Game One in relief. He was sacrificed to second by Bip Roberts.

Vizquel hit an 0-1 pitch back at Mendoza, who tried to glove the one-bopper but deflected it behind shortstop Derek Jeter into left-center field. Grissom raced home with the winning run as the throw from left fielder Chad Curtis sailed high.

It was Vizquel's third hit of the game and Cleveland's first in 13 at-bats with runners in scoring position in the last two games.

In Baltimore, Mike Mussina again outpitched Randy Johnson and Jeff Reboulter and Geronimo Berroa hit solo home runs. "Mussina didn't throw one ball in the middle of the plate," said Mariners outfielder Jay Buhner. "I didn't think anybody could do that to us."

"I tip my cap to Mussina," Mariners shortstop Alex Rodriguez said. "Beating us twice, I've got much more respect for him."

After allowing two runs and five hits over seven innings in Game One, Mussina (2-0) was even

better. He gave up just two hits — a solo homer by Edgar Martinez and a single by Roh Ducey in the second inning — while striking out seven in seven innings. The right-hander improved to 10-1 all-time against the Mariners and 3-0 against Johnson this year.

"Just give him all the credit, coming back the way he did on three days rest," Mariners manager Lou Piniella said. "I'd like to congratulate Baltimore, not only because they just beat us. They had an outstanding year, and they proved in this series that they are a darn good team."

For the first time in the series, the Orioles used the formula that earned them 98 wins and an East Division title this year. Hard-throwing Armando Benitez pitched a hitless eighth and Randy Myers worked a 1-2-3 ninth with two strikeouts for his 46th save in 47 chances this season.

Johnson, the fireballing left-hander and the likely AL Cy Young Award winner, won 20 games this season. But four of his six losses came to the Orioles, and the Mariners did not win any of his five starts against Baltimore.

GREEN BAY, Wisconsin (AFP) — Super Bowl champions Green Bay handed surprising Tampa Bay their first defeat of the season on Sunday, stretching their home winning streak to 19 games in the vaunted "Battle of the Bays."

Brett Favre hit Antonio Freeman with a pair of scoring plays and defensive end Gabe Wilkins returned an interception 77 yards for a touchdown in a 21-point second quarter, and the Packers held on to beat the Buccaneers 21-16.

The victory over their National Conference Central division rivals boosted the Packers' so far unim-

pressive bid to defend their National Football League championship, while the Bucs failed in their bid to maintain their status as the only undefeated team in the NFC.

"It was a hard fought game by both teams," said Packers coach Mike Holmgren. "We made a few too many mistakes and gave Tampa Bay too many opportunities. But it was just a great division game."

The Packers increased their Lambeau Field winning streak to 19 games, the third-longest home streak in NFL history. No NFC Central team has won at Lambeau (16 games) since a 30-10 victory by Chicago

in October of 1992.

Favre, who completed 21-of-31 passes for 191 yards, connected with Freeman for touchdowns of 31 and six yards in the second quarter.

Tampa Bay quarterback Trent Dilfer struggled for the second straight week. He completed 16-of-29 passes for 179 yards with an interception one week after passing for just 100 yards in a win over Arizona.

The teams meet again December 7 at Tampa Bay. "Championships aren't won in September, they're not won in October," said Bucs coach Tony Dungy. The National Conference

East tightened up as leaders Dallas and Washington both lost to division rivals.

The New York Giants moved up with a 20-17 victory over the Cowboys, highlighted by New York safety Tito Wooten's 61-yard interception return for a touchdown.

The Cowboys trailed 20-9 in the fourth quarter, and their late rally failed on their final possession when they were unable to set up for a possible game-tying field goal before time expired.

Philadelphia defeated Washington 24-10 as Ricky Waters ran for 104 yards and two touchdowns, and quarterback Ty Detmer

completed 17-of-27 passes and also ran for a score.

The Eagles moved up a notch from the bottom of the NFC East, now occupied by Arizona, who lost 20-19 to non-division foes Minnesota.

The Jacksonville Jaguars stayed atop the American Conference Central Division with a 21-13 victory over the Cincinnati Bengals.

In other games, Buffalo beat Detroit 22-13, San Diego beat Oakland 25-10, Seattle defeated Tennessee 16-13 and the New York Jets held on for a 16-12 victory over Indianapolis.

Rusedski in line for ATP World Championships

BASEL (AFP) — Greg Rusedski, showing surprising all-round skills, out-gunned Mark Philippoussis in straight sets to win the million-dollar Swiss Indoors ATP Tour title here on Sunday.

The 6-3, 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/3) win could push him to No. 4 in the ATP Tour rankings when they are published on Monday — and put him in line for the ATP World Championships in

Hanover. There was little between the two men in a match of big-servers. One service break in the fourth game allowed Rusedski to take the first set 6-3.

Rusedski, who started their match ranked 10th in the world, won a second set tie-break 8-6. Two big backhand drives opened a gap Philippoussis eventually pulled back only for the Briton to serve out the set.

Neither man could break through in the third set and Philippoussis was left playing catch-up in the tie-break, which Rusedski won 7-3 when the 20-year-old Australian hit a backhand long.

"I think I played very well in the first set and he missed a couple of volleys that let me in," the Canadian-born Briton said after his second straight win over the Australian this year following his Wimbledon triumph.

He praised new coach Tony Pickard for helping him raise his game since he lost the U.S. Open semi-final to Patrick Rafter of Australia.

Philippoussis had prevented the first all-British final since the Open era dawned in 1968 by beating Britain's Tim Henman in Saturday's semi-finals.

The Australian lost to Germany's Nicolas Pietrangeli in the Toulouse

tournament final in France last week.

The win was worth \$138,000 to Rusedski, who reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon this year before

losing to Frenchman Cedric Pioline and then became the first Briton to make the top 10 by reaching the U.S. Open final at Flushing Meadow.

60 die in Algeria as troops prepare to storm Islamists

PARIS (R) — About 40 civilians, including at least 16 schoolchildren, and 20 rebels were killed in Algeria's latest violence as troops prepared to storm a base of Islamists near Algiers, Algerian newspapers said Monday.

"There is not much time left for them. It is a matter of hours," said an army officer quoted by Al Watan newspaper about an impending assault on an Armed Islamic Group (GIA) base in Ouled Allet area, some 20 kilometres south of Algiers.

About 150 hardline members of the GIA are holding out in the town which they first took over in 1994, according to the newspapers.

The schoolchildren were killed Sunday as they were heading in a bus for their classes under a security escort in Bouinan area where almost simultaneously government troops clashed with Islamist militants, the newspapers said.

An escort of armed volunteers, in a vehicle ahead of the schoolbus, ran over a mine and was blown up, killing all the occupants, La Tribune and Le Matin newspapers said, adding the attack took place at Sidi Serhan in Blida province, 50 kilometres south of Algiers.

Le Matin, which put the number of the dead schoolchildren at 17, said they had been killed by "terrorists," Algerian shorthand for Islamist rebels who have been trying to topple the government since early 1992.

La Tribune and Le Matin said the gunmen opened fire with machine-guns as the children headed to school in the morning and that some of the pupils also had their throats cut.

Liberte newspaper said the 20 rebels who carried

Belgium arrests alleged Islamists

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Belgian police on Monday arrested 10 people suspected of belonging to Algerian Islamist groups, police said.

The raid was carried out at the request of Jean-Louis Bruguiere, a French magistrate investigating terrorism cases in France, including the dismantling in northern France last year of a gang linked to Islamist groups.

Police said the suspects were of North African origin and had Algerian, Belgian or French nationality. No arrest warrants have been issued and police did not find any weapons or explosives.

out the massacre were killed later by the security forces.

The slaughter of schoolchildren occurred as Algerian authorities celebrated international teachers' day.

Official ceremonies were held in main cities with the aim of boosting morale in schools in the country where more than 700 schools were burnt and more than 500 pupils and teachers killed since 1994 in attacks the authorities blame on Islamist rebels.

Also Sunday, about 50 rebels burst into Ouled Sidi Yahia hamlet in Ain Defla province, 130 kilometres south of the Algerian capital, cutting the throats of 10 men who had asked the government to provide them with weapons to protect their families, Liberte said.

The village was wrecked in 1994 when government troops were said to have killed up to 700 GIA members in a battle hailed by the authorities through newspaper leaks as a turning point to wipe out the Islamists.

Three civilians were found decapitated Sunday in Sidi Youcef in the southwestern province of Saïda where troops reportedly killed 40 rebels late last month. Three more civilians were killed by having their throats cut Saturday in the nearby village of

Hassasna, Al Watan said.

Ten more civilians were killed in the same province during last week, said Al Watan without elaborating.

"Towards the final raid," said an Al Watan headline about the siege of the GIA fighters holed up in a heavily fortified base in Ouled Allet, deserted by its 12,000 residents since 1994 when the rebels settled in and ordered them to leave.

The newspaper said the besieged guerrillas were veterans who had fought alongside Afghan Islamists in the 1980s and 1990s in Afghanistan.

"They are scattered in hands of seven to 10 in villages. They have women hostage taken from Benthalha and Er Rais [villages]," said Al Watan, quoting an army officer.

More than 400 civilians were slaughtered in Er Rais (also known as Sidi Rais) and Benthalha in August and late September, according to residents and local newspapers.

The authorities, blaming the slaughter on Islamists, gave a lower death toll — 98 in Er Rais and 85 in Benthalha.

More than 60,000 people had died in Algeria's violence since 1992 when army-backed authorities cancelled a general election in which the Islamic Salvation Front had taken a huge lead.



LOSE WEIGHT THE ROYAL WAY: Weight Watchers United States spokesperson Sarah, the Duchess of York, (left) admires an apple given to her at a press conference in New York Monday held to announce a jump in new memberships in the weight loss programme. The apple was given to the Duchess by Leonore Tedeschi (right) of Elmwood Park, New Jersey, identified as a Weight Watchers 'success story' who lost 90 pounds (Reuters photo)

Brother of slain nurse warned he could lose \$1.2m if he does not act

RIYADH (AFP) — The lawyer of a British nurse accused of murdering an Australian colleague in Saudi Arabia warned the victim's brother Monday that he could lose a \$1.2 million settlement to spare her life.

Frank Gilford, the brother, could also face legal proceedings in Australia unless he formally waives his right under Sharia law to demand the death penalty for Deborah Parry, said Salah Hejailan.

Mr. Gilford has signed an 11-page "deed of settlement" by his hand on Sept. 19, 1997 under which he is legally obligated to waive any death penalty which may be imposed," Mr. Hejailan said in a statement.

The lawyer said the sum of \$1.2 million has been deposited into a trust account in Australia "and will be disbursed to Mr. Gilford when he performs his part of the bargain."

Under the Islamic laws observed in Saudi Arabia, the family of slain nurse Yvonne Gilford has the right

to spare Parry's life if she is convicted of murder in return for "diya," or blood money.

The defence has said it already struck a settlement with Mr. Gilford, ahead of any verdict being announced against Parry, and that the threat of the death penalty has been lifted.

But "now, upon deposit of the settlement sum, Gilford is also bound under Australian law as well to perform his part of the bargain under penalty of law," warned Mr. Hejailan.

"Otherwise, legal proceedings may resume against Gilford in Australia, with his liability increased by any default on his part in implementing the deed of settlement."

Mr. Hejailan said the brother was making "additional requests" that could "lose Mr. Gilford his money and may cause the charity, which Mr. Gilford said he was interested in assisting in memory of his sister, to lose the money as well."

It did not elaborate on the

demands of Mr. Gilford, who is reportedly seeking an eight-year jail sentence for Parry.

A Riyadh-based lawyer for the Gilfords said Sunday that the brother has yet to initiate the legal steps to lift the threat of death hanging over the 38-year-old nurse from southern England.

For a settlement to be formalised, "we must submit it to the Saudi courts, and the ILF has not received anything up to now" from Mr. Gilford, Osama Sulaim of the International Law Firm said.

Mr. Gilford himself said Saturday from his home in Jamestown, south Australia, that the money issue was still "up in the air."

Putting pressure on the brother to formally notify the Saudi legal authorities of a decision, Mr. Hejailan said that "unless Gilford comes to his senses soon," the amount of Diya would be slashed.

It would be cut to "no more than the prescribed amount of Diya in this case, of which

the legal maximum is \$26,400 to be adjusted according to the case," the defence lawyer said.

The \$1.2 million has been raised by British firms with business interests in the Saudi kingdom, according to Mr. Hejailan.

Another British nurse, Lucille McLauchlan, 31, has been sentenced to 500 lashes and eight years in jail for her role in the Dec. 11 murder of Yvonne Gilford at a hospital in the eastern Saudi city of Dhahran.

Parry and McLauchlan, who deny murdering Gilford, retracted confessions they said were made after sexual and physical abuse following their arrest.

The 55-year-old Australian was found stabbed 13 times, battered and suffocated. Another defence counsel said Sunday that a ruling in an appeal for McLauchlan, lodged last week before the Islamic court in Khobar, near Dhahran, was expected "after a week."

Truce committee meets over Lebanon, Israel complaints

NAQOURA (AFP) — The international committee monitoring a Truce in south Lebanon met Monday to discuss Lebanese and Israeli complaints of alleged ceasefire violations, sources close to the Lebanese delegation said.

The five-nation panel, in its 19th meeting this year, convened at 11:00 a.m. at the headquarters of the U.N. peacekeeping force in the town of Naqoura, near the Lebanese-Israeli border.

Lebanon has lodged two complaints charging that Israeli bombardments on Saturday damaged civilian property in the southern villages of Touloun and Nabatiyeh Al Fawkah.

Israel also has filed two protests, the first over the killing of two Lebanese civilians in a roadside bombing Sunday while picking tobacco in a field inside the self declared

Israeli "security zone" in south Lebanon.

Israel lodged a complaint Thursday over a mortar attack the previous day by Hizbollah fighters on a South Lebanon Army (SLA) military outpost, allegedly from a civilian village.

The two Lebanese civilians killed in Sunday's bombing were a 45-year-old woman and her nine-year-old son. They were working next to the Hula-to-Markaba road in the central sector of the border zone when the bomb exploded, according to the Israeli-armed (SLA) militia.

Hizbollah, which spearheads Lebanese resistance to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, accused Israel of planting the roadside bomb.

"This new crime by the Zionist entity is aimed at sabotaging the [truce]

arrangements of April 1996" between Israel and Hizbollah, said Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, the group's most senior official in southern Lebanon.

He said Israel had planted the device "to discredit the resistance against the Israeli occupation."

Israel occupies the buffer zone to ward off cross-border attacks on its northern territory. Under the terms of the April 1996 ceasefire agreement both sides are banned from launching attacks on or from civilian areas.

The truce committee — made up of France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the U.S. — was set up to monitor the truce accord which ended a 17-day Israeli offensive against Hizbollah in south Lebanon that cost the lives of more than 170 people, mostly civilians.

World Court to hold Lockerbie hearings on October 13

THE HAGUE (R) — The International Court of Justice said Monday it would open hearings on Oct. 13 on the dispute between Libya, Britain and the U.S. over the 1988 bombing of a U.S. airliner above Lockerbie in Scotland.

Libya took its case in the U.N. Court in March 1992, asking it to rule that London and Washington had no right to demand the extradition of two Libyan suspects for trial in Scotland or the U.S.

Britain and the U.S. contend that the court does not have jurisdiction over the case and this issue must be resolved at the hearings from Oct. 13 to 22 before the proceedings can go any further.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Libya in April 1992 for failing to extradite the two men whom Britain and the U.S. have accused of planting a bomb on board Pan Am flight 103 which exploded over Lockerbie, killing 270 people.

Libya maintains that under international law it is entitled to try the two men in its own courts, but Britain and the U.S. have rejected this as unacceptable.

Last Tuesday Libya called on the U.N. General Assembly to intervene in the Lockerbie affair to enable the two suspects to be tried in a country other than Britain or the U.S.

EU accepts U.S. olive branch in row over Cuba, Iran ties

LUXEMBOURG (AFP) — The European Union (EU) moved Monday to defuse the risk of a trans-Atlantic trade war over controversial U.S. legislation designed to punish companies that do business with Cuba, Iran and Libya.

EU foreign ministers agreed here that Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan should continue talks with Washington beyond the Oct. 15 deadline for a negotiated settlement to the dispute over the extra-territorial application of the U.S. laws.

The conciliatory move followed weekend signals from the U.S. administration that it would not seek to impose sanctions on French oil group Total over its \$2 investment in Iran for fear of triggering a damaging rift with the EU.

Mr. Brittan welcomed the fact that the U.S. had concentrated on the lengthy consultation procedures preceding any move to impose sanctions "rather than an expression of any readiness to rush to judgement."

The EU agreed in April that it would suspend its World Trade Organisation (WTO) action against the U.S. Helms Burton law on Cuba while the two sides attempted by Oct. 15 to negotiate a deal to make European companies exempt from the legislation.

Mr. Brittan said there had never been an absolute

deadline but warned that he was not prepared to continue negotiations indefinitely unless "significant progress" was made quickly.

"There is no point in carrying on negotiating indefinitely if you are not making progress and I think we have not made enough progress so far."

A senior EU diplomat said the "real cut-off point" for a deal was now next April, the point at which the EU's suspended WTO action will lapse if it is not reactivated.

"Clearly nobody wants to make this dispute boil over," Both sides are anxious to avoid a WTO ruling on Helms Burton, which most analysts believe would favour the EU. The U.S. has made it clear it would ignore a pro-EU ruling on national security grounds, dealing a serious blow to the WTO's credibility.

Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes said the contested U.S. legislation remained "unacceptable."

But he said there was now a widely held feeling that the U.S. would desist from applying it to European companies. Spain has traditionally been among the EU countries most keen on a WTO challenge to Helms Burton.

French European Affairs Minister Pierre Moscovici said the U.S. had demonstrated "a clear desire to play down the divergences between us."

But he warned that the dispute would not simply disappear. "In terms of the global negotiation there has been no significant progress."

U.S. officials warned last week that the scale of Total's investment in Iran (in partnership with Russia's Gazprom and Malaysia's Petronas) had made it politically much harder for President Bill Clinton to waive the application of the 1996 Iran-Libya sanctions act to European companies.

In theory, the act mandates punitive measures against any company that invests more than \$40 million a year in the two countries' oil industries.

The Washington Post reported Saturday that U.S. President Bill Clinton's administration had decided against sanctions against Total, but will instead try to get members of the EU to pressure Iran further into abandoning support for terrorism.

A similar accommodation has allowed Mr. Clinton to waive the two most contested aspects of the Helms Burton law on Cuba: the provisions for action in the U.S. courts against European companies that obtain assets confiscated by the state after the 1959 revolution and for the executives of such companies to be denied visas to enter the U.S.



Playboy and strippers enter the Vatican's new Latin dictionary

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — From now on, the corridors of the Vatican could echo with the Latin words for such daring concepts as strip-tease artists and playboys, as recorded in the Holy See's new dictionary. A team of experts beavered away for more than eight years under the supervision of Abbot Carlo Egger — Pope John Paul II's chief aide on drawing up official church documents and one of the world's leading Latin scholars — to produce the "Lexicon Recentis Latinitas" published by the Vatican Library Monday. The tome is packed with some 15,000 neologisms to adapt the official language of the church to the exigencies of late 20th-century life. Henceforth, "juvenes voluptarii" (playboys) who drink "vischium" (whisky) and go to night-clubs to ogle at spectacles of "sui ipsius nudatores" (strip-teasers) can in theory feature in the Vatican's documents. Less salaciously, the dictionary decrees that the word for shampoo is "capitulum," toilets are a "cella intima," a video cassette is an "instrumentum telebolumendis exceptionum," while an Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) becomes a "res inexplicata volans."

Lock up your pets, Michael Jackson concert organisers warn

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Organisers of Michael Jackson's two upcoming concerts here have warned pet owners in surrounding suburbs to keep their animals indoors during the events, to prevent unnecessary distress and anguish to the creatures.

The superstar's concerts at Johannesburg Stadium on Oct. 10 and 12 will use enough explosives and to bring down a small building, and will be heard several kilometres away. Jackson's South African spokeswoman Penny Steyn told the SABA news agency. The concert's pyrotechnic effects are interspersed with clips from giant video screens, and include a grand entrance by Jackson in a grand stage prop — his personal rocket ship.

Homesick sailors can now call home

LONDON (AFP) — British sailors who get homesick on the high seas can call loved ones on mobile phones under a new navy policy. "All they have to do is seek permission in case of radar interference," a Royal Navy spokesman said. "We have a duty to care for our servicemen and women. It is excellent for morale if they can speak to loved ones when they are away from home."

Navy sources said that with mobile phones increasingly commonplace and so many international phone networks popping up, banning such calls would have been impossible anyway.

Spanish dictator's love letters to be sold at auction

MADRID (AFP) — Thirty three love letters written by Spanish dictator Francisco Franco in his younger years to a woman who spurned him will be sold at auction on October 24 in Madrid by the Duran auction house. The notes, dated 1913, are written on postcards and signed by the future dictator who was 21 years old at the time and just out of military school. "I love you a lot, if not enormously," writes Franco in one postcard addressed to "my good friend" Sofia Subira, a young woman from Melilla, a Spanish enclave in North Africa. Although Spain's married Carmen Franco, the native town of El

couple had met in

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